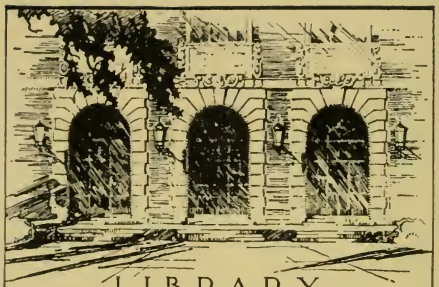
Cosmo Nevill.



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WYNVILLE;

OR,

CLUBS AND COTERIES.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE AGE OF PITT AND FOX."

"There be that can pack the cards and yet cannot play well, so there are some that are good in canvasses and factions, that are otherwise weak men."
—LORD BACON.

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. III.

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WYNVILLE;

OR,

CLUBS AND COTERIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOVERS TOGETHER—A CONFESSION.

Upon the night of the day on which we had gone to the Abbey of Donbridge, I lay awake in bed for a long time, meditating on my chance of gaining the hand of Lady Jane. I could not understand how her marriage could extricate her family from

embarrassment, as I could not conceive that a bridegroom would, on his union with Lady Jane, be so profuse as to lavish a fortune upon Lord Mowbray. My curiosity was excited to know more of the history of the family, and I resolved not to leave Mowbray's Court, on this occasion, without again appealing to Lady Jane, and paying her further court.

Nor was the opportunity long wanting. On the following morning, after breakfast, we found ourselves sauntering together on the terrace of the old-fashioned garden, overlooking a formal and quaint fish-pond, in which the carp were seen floating idly about. I renewed the subject of my former conversation, and declared my anxiety to know whether, if free to choose, Lady Jane would accept my hand.

"I think," replied Lady Jane, "that I

have already shown you the greatest favour. But once for all, I may tell you that I am by no means so sure that if I were free, that I would accept your suit, though I cannot deny, that my manners to you have always shown that your talents, your conversation, and your character, have pleased me. But you have in my eyes one very grievous fault."

"A grievous fault!—name it, I entreat."

"Well, I am sorry to state that you are by no means a religious man. That you are not an infidel, I am aware; as of course you have too much sense and knowledge to be boldly opposed to religion; but you have no abiding sense of revelation, and you are only a half-hearted believer in revelation. The society of such companions as Mr. Granby Cumberland and Mr. Gabriel Cleveland, cannot certainly be very im-

proving; and I am sorry to say, Mr. Wynville, that I have often heard you spoken of as being a man of indifference in matters of religion."

"Like other young men of the present age, I believe that I have been too careless about matters of faith, and I do not lay claim in any degree to be what the world calls a religious character; but I must say, in self-defence, and in reply to your charge, that my short experience of public life has forced on my understanding the tremendous importance of religion to mankind. I should be an absolutist in my politics, if I saw that religion was losing its hold over the people; for when they cease to have faith in the unseen world, and to have no dread of its retribution, then there is no mode of governing left but by force."

"Oh! that is the mere cant creed of all

worldly politicians, in all ages, who state that religion is a capital assistant in keeping people down. Your worldly politicians never dream that religion, when rightly taught and inculcated, is the only means of raising mankind, of lifting them upward, and ennobling their natures with high and soul-stirring principles. Ah! you are a Whig in your Christianity as in your politics, and think of the Church merely as a grand corporation of consecrated parish constables and right reverend beadles, who are to frighten the foolish little minds of the people with judgment to come. Well, I should never be happy with a man who was a Socinian at heart like so many of your Whig gentlemen."

"I assure you, Lady Jane, that Socinianism is the very last creed I should embrace. It is what a celebrated divine called it, 'a weak and conceited heresy.' I would

sooner be a Deist out-right than a Socinian; for of all the various inferences from the Scriptures drawn by private judgment, none is more inconsistent than the Socinian scheme. Its pretended learning never recovered the assaults of Bishop Horsley; and Magee on the *Atonement* has effectually settled the claims of the Priestleys and the Belshams. If I were to be an unbeliever at all, I would be a bold and consistent Deist rather than the timid, shrinking infidel of the Socinian school, who inconsistently compromises with the instinct of the human heart in favour of a revelation; and while rationalising the Scriptures, and treating the Divine Author as author was never treated before, affects to be a Christian, and recoils from the consequences of his own levelling and destructive misapplication of the mere human reason."

"I am glad to hear so much from you on

this point; but I have been told, and I infer it also from your character, that there is a vague, speculative turn in your mode of thinking upon religion, which approximates too closely to this new-fangled mode of rationalising the mysteries of truth."

"It is only too true that, mixing amongst men of the world, and associating with literary men of unsettled faith and unattached to particular forms of Christianity, that I have contracted some of that speculative leaning to which you advert. It is, perhaps, inseparable from the constitution of my mind, and I cannot certainly help it; but I am well aware that it is a dangerous habit. But I assure you, Lady Jane, that I am no infidel; that I dislike the jargon of the conventicle, and that I am no friend to the system of fierce fanaticism which some evangelical preachers have affected. And

now that I trust I have removed from your mind misapprehensions about me, I hope that I may hear from your lips a satisfactory expression upon my character."

"We are in many respects opposed to each other in a variety of ways. You are a modern Whig, and I am an old Tory in my creed. You are a Whig by birth and connections, and I am a Tory. We do not chime together in the all-important subject of religion. Disguise it as you may from yourself, you are as much a rationalist as if you were a Socinian, and I abhor all schemes that trench upon the majesty and sublime reality of the Christian creed. We should not be happy together."

"Say not so, dearest Lady Jane; I promise that no difference of opinion on speculative subjects would ever prevent me from loving you with my whole heart and soul.

What is Toryism or Whiggism compared to the enthusiastic feelings of admiration which I feel for you? and I entreat you again to tell me whether I may hope that I have a place in that heart?"

She was silent. She made no reply to my question, though I eagerly renewed it again and again. We walked together along the garden terrace. The air was perfumed with the odour of a thousand flowers, and the day was balmy with the breath of summer. It was one of those bright and joyous mornings in which we forget there are such things as rainy days or November fogs, when the body is exhilarated with pleasurable sensation, and life becomes of itself an intense enjoyment.

I took her gently by the hand. She withdrew it. I whispered into her ear—

"Lady Jane, with my whole heart and

soul I love you. No other of your sex has ever thrilled my heart with such sensations. Nature and all of life are dearer and more delightful to me when I am in your society. Since I have enjoyed the pleasure of knowing you, the world has acquired fresh interest in my eyes. Mere ambition has ceased since I have had the hope of pleasing you, and to make myself honourable and worthy in your eyes was the secret of my exertions in Parliament. All my hopes are centred in you, and I have no earthly desire beyond that of obtaining your affection. Say, dearest Lady Jane, whether these feelings are reciprocated by you. Tell me whether I have a place in your heart."

She was silent and agitated. She wept some time. I kissed her hand with eagerness—and I listened with silence while her voice faltered as she said—

"Oh! Mr. Wynville, I am ashamed of myself—I am ashamed of my weakness. It is my woman's weakness—my secret has been discovered, though I could so wish that it had been concealed."

"You love me—yes! I rejoice to have made the discovery."

"No! No!" cried Lady Jane, suddenly—"that is—I mean—you created in my heart an interest I never felt before, but it would be vain for you to press your suit—I cannot accept you. My father—my family would never hear of it. I should be exposed to their censure, and I will stand or fall with the fortunes of my house."

"Hear me, Lady Jane; I see that there is a struggle in your heart, and I rejoice to know that I have a strong interest in you. It is to me the most delicious joy to know, as I do now, that you have not even looked

coldly on my ardent affection for you. I now appeal to you in presence of the Power to which we are all responsible, not to surrender yourself to your family, when your own happiness and that of another is at stake. Surely you will not be so rash as to sacrifice yourself to a blind desire of serving your family, at the peril of your own happiness, and perhaps the injury of your character?"

"My feelings," cried she, "draw me in one direction, and my sense of duty urges me in another. I lament my weakness in allowing my feelings to be so moved against my reason. But I fear that I have been too proud and self-reliant, and that I have too much confided in my own powers of self-government, and of stifling my feelings."

"I rejoice to know of what you call your weakness. Surely you are not to chide

yourself for experiencing those feelings which are implanted in human nature? Until I saw you, Lady Jane, I thought that ambition was the only feeling that could rule my mind. I never cared for those softer passions, but now I have experienced the very same change of feeling in my heart, which you describe as having taken place in yours; and surely you will not try and conquer feelings which—"

"Oh! Mr. Wynville; let us cease this conversation."

"Nay! I will not turn from its subject without first ascertaining whether, if you were perfectly free to-morrow to choose as you pleased, whether you would accept my hand."

"I would do so I confess," said Lady Jane, and she blushed while she spoke. "But it is vain to think that we can be united; for—"

Just then the garden door opened, and a servant advanced towards us. We were at the other end of the garden. We, of course, changed the conversation, and the servant came to announce the arrival of Lord Lingard, and to say that Lord Mowbray had sent for Lady Jane, as he wished o speak with her. At the mention of Lord Lingard's name, I observed that Lady Jane was confused. Her face grew rather pale, and she experienced inward emotions. She walked rapidly towards the house, and gave hasty directions to the servant, as if for the purpose of distracting her mind, or hiding from observation the state of her feelings.

CHAPTER II.

A RIVAL AND AN OBSTACLE.

After Lady Jane had left the garden, I rambled out into the old park, and I gave loose to exquisite imaginings. A beautiful woman, who had first made me feel the pains of love, had confessed her wish that she might be mine, and it was now only a question how to command circumstances so

as that I might accomplish our union. I could not believe that serious obstacles interposed between the fulfilment of my desire, and I enjoyed delightful sensations, as I wandered under the wooded vales, and lounged through the picturesque scenery of the park at Mowbray's Court. It was always a beautiful scene, but on that morning I thought that it had never looked lovelier; and the pleasures of life, the sensations of existence, the joy of playing a part in the drama of the world, never appeared to me so bright and happy before.

On returning to the Court, in the middle of the day, I found that Lord Mowbray and Lord Lingard were closeted together, and Lady Jane was not to be seen. I rode out until dinner time.

On entering the dining-room before dinner, I found only Lord Lingard. He

bowed to me with some familiarity. We had a slight acquaintance in London.

"I wonder, Mr. Wynville, how you can rusticate at so important a time, when there is so much work before you in the Commons. I can tell you that I heard more than one of your party lamenting your absence."

"Nay, my Lord, we must have some holidays. We cannot always be on the stretch, even to please the whipper-in. I have worked hard enough, and I think the work ought to be shared equally amongst the young men of my party."

"A very bad idea. Why, surely you must know that it is in the House of Commons as in trades or professions; the grand desideratum is to get the business to do. The more that is given to a young Member of Parliament, the higher will be his name

with the public. I never before heard of an aspirant to political distinction anxious to shun the labours of agitator on a public question. In fact, when politicians take up questions of any kind, they always suppose that they have a vested interest in them, and do not desire to admit partnership at all. Have you been staying here long?" continued Lord Lingard, fixing his keen small eyes on me.

"A few days only," I replied, not half liking the very inquisitive air and manner of Lord Lingard. "I particularly enjoy the country; and the demesne of Mowbray's Court is very beautiful at this season of the year."

"Very beautiful indeed," said Lord Lingard. "Humph!" he added, in a lower tone, as if some thought or suspicion had crossed his mind.

The door opened, and Lady Jane entered the room by herself. She was dressed for dinner, and was very pale—so pale for one of her high colour, that I supposed that she was ill. Her face appeared to me to bear the marks of agitation, but her manner was composed. I noticed that when I addressed her, she did not turn her eyes upon me; and also, when Lord Lingard spoke to her, she did not turn towards him her full face. It was evident that she was under some feeling of restraint.

Lord Lingard handed her in to dinner, at the desire of Lord Mowbray, who was unusually grave and reserved. I fancied, somehow or other, that I was *de trop;* and although I felt as if there were some evil impending over me, I should have rejoiced to have been absent from that dismal dinner. Lady Jane talked very little: she

was not cross or sulky, or even gloomy, but she seemed out of spirits, and was cold in her manner. She retired as soon as possible from the table.

Lord Lingard was the only person in the party who was perfectly at ease. His soul for the time seemed engaged upon the excellent dinner and wines which were before him; and the only thing bordering on amusement that I enjoyed, was watching the zest with which he devoured his favourite dishes. He was in many respects a singular contrast to Lord Mowbray. The latter was emphatically, in appearance and manners, a gentleman, but Lord Lingard was the very impersonation of a *parvenu.* His vast and obese person, his great languid cheeks plumped out with excess of gluttony, and mottled with glaring symptoms of good living, contrasted strangely with his great

mass of white hair, and his small, grey, glittering eyes, twinkling with cunning, sensuality, and vicious indulgence. He had, however, great knowledge of the world, and was a thorough unbeliever in political virtue of any kind. Like Lord Mowbray, he had a relish for jobbing and what might be called the dirty work of politics. But Lord Mowbray's hands were dirty in the same way as a surgeon's in an hospital, the work in which he was engaged was politically necessary to his party, and somebody should do it. But Lord Lingard dabbled in political uncleanness more like a scavenger than a surgeon; and he had the same pleasure in the idea of a general election, that a street sweeper has in the approach of wet weather.

I got away from the dinner table as soon as I possibly could, and flew to the drawing-room, hoping to have a talk with Lady

Jane, but she was not there. I stood by the fire, and asked myself why was it that my spirits had fallen down to zero since morning? How long I remained to meditate I cannot say, but the door of the drawing-room opened suddenly and softly, and Lady Jane entered. The moment I saw her figure, I advanced to her, intending to speak to her.

"Oh! Lady Jane," said I—

But scarcely were the words out of my mouth than Lady Jane made a sudden and significant sign to me, and placed her finger on her lip, slightly frowning at the same time, and at the same moment I heard the voices of approaching persons, and from the dining-room came her father and his guest, Lord Lingard.

"Lady Jane," said Lord Lingard, "we have been drinking your health in some

famous Burgundy. Egad! such Burgundy I have not seen this many a day. Well, Lady Jane, I trust that we shall soon see you in town. How can you shut yourself up at this season of the year, just when London is so gay?"

"I cannot say that I am fond of London, Lord Lingard; I prefer the country."

"But you won't be so always. No; when you know more of London, and have a wide circle of friends, then, then, Lady Jane, you will be as reluctant to leave Grosvenor Square as you are now loath to leave Mowbray's Court. Why one is out of the world in the country. The town is the only place for pleasure. 'Tis the only spot where men and women can find variety of pursuits to amuse themselves."

"Balls and parties are so monotonous; they are the same over and over again."

"You might as well say that breakfast and dinner are the same over and over again. A good dinner every day may be monotonous, but it is by no means undelightful to any one blessed with an appetite."

"Well, if dining be a great source of human enjoyment, you ought to stay in the country, Lord Lingard; for the fresh air would enable you to eat twice as much." —Lady Jane laughed while she said this.

"Not a bad notion either," said Lord Lingard; "but though in the country one has the fresh air, in the town we have a fresh cook every day to astonish and tickle us with variety. But variety, to be sure, is the great charm of a town life."

"It palls upon those who have unoccupied intellects," said Lady Jane. "Surely the people who suffer most from *ennui* are the fashionable world in town? I never knew

of more discontent than I have observed amongst the denizens of May Fair. The round of pleasures palls upon their fancies. They become sated with enjoyment, and their minds acquire a peculiar relish for spiteful conversation and scandal of every kind."

"Well, but see what a position may be occupied by a great lady in London life! In the country her acquaintances and her influence are limited to a mere confined circle of rural society; but in town, with a brilliant mansion, often thrown open to the world, she can exercise vast power, and wield even great political authority of a certain kind. With a great fortune at her command, she can patronise the arts and men and women of merit, and the vast crowd of hungry *gens des lettres*. She can reign like another Queen, and become a

Countess Cowper in society, a power like a Duchess of Devonshire, or a Lady Jersey."

"Such a life requires something else besides power and popularity, to make it pleasing. In the Duchess of Devonshire's case, she had friends that she was most anxious to serve. Her friendship for the Prince of Wales, and for Charles James Fox, and her anxiety to promote their personal success, in opposition to the King, the Queen, and the Court—it was that personal feeling that gave such intensity to the Duchess of Devonshire's politics; and I take for granted that a woman can scarcely become a very zealous and active politician, unless she is personally interested in the public by hopes and fears for those she loves."

While she spoke thus, Lord Lingard

looked at her attentively, and answered her last remarks by merely saying—

"After all, there's not half the love in the world that people say."

This conversation continued for the night in the same strain, Lord Lingard jocularly talking, in a sceptical way, about the romantic ideas which filled some young ladies' minds. Lady Jane was quiet, and rather reserved in her conversation, and Lord Mowbray remained in a dull and grave mood throughout the evening.

I was awakened very early on the next morning, by a servant entering my room with the intelligence that a courier had arrived from town, with special despatches for me. I read them without delay, and found that I should repair to town instantly. Political matters were at a crisis, and I

left hurried notes to Lord Mowbray and to Lady Jane, making my best apology, and having breakfasted in haste, started for town without delay.

CHAPTER III.

DEATH-BED OF A SAGE—PASSAGE TO IMMORTALITY.

Love and politics seldom chime well together. I found the leaders of my party indignant at my absence, and I was even taunted with desertion by some of the more snappish of the heads of the *clique*, who were then intent upon playing for the leadership of the liberal party. My appearance at my post

again, however, smoothed matters over; and on the very night of my return to town I suddenly jumped to my legs, and made a short sharp speech, bristling with some startling facts that I had picked up in a conversation at Mowbray's Court with my noble host. The reply was ready beyond all expectation, and even staggered for a moment the habitual composure of the able and artful leader of the ministerial side. My absence was in a moment forgotten by my leaders, and faces mantling with smiles greeted me—aye, the very faces that had lowered sullenly on me in the morning: so great is the merit of success!

The Whigs were now on the eve of power; and their leaders were intently interested in the expectation of the changes that would follow from their arrival into office. I was looked upon as a youthful expectant of the

party, and I took part in several of the councils which a certain orator of the party held at that time. I remember Sir Charles Maclaurin was especially interested in contemplating the moral aspect of the changes of the time. He had grown very indolent of late, and his health had become precarious; but he occasionally went down to the House of Commons; and I even heard him dissert with much energy on a motion made by Lord J. Rowland for Parliamentary Reform. His speech was listened to with great interest by a few of the more acute and intelligent Members of the House of Commons, but the great majority of it were inattentive to his profound remarks, and unaffected by his acute and subtle discrimination. The majority of the members would perhaps have paid more attention to Mr. Joseph Hume and his "tottle of the whole."

I breakfasted one morning, at this time, with Maclaurin, and heard him—in conversation with Lord J. Rowland and myself—express his sober conviction that even upon Tory principles of policy, not to speak of Whig principles, there should be a reform of some kind in Parliament.

"Our system of government is discredited at present, and the confidence of the public is diminished. When Napoleon was at our gates, we struggled *pro aris et focis*, and internal reform was a matter of comparative insignificance, when national existence was at stake. But now all has changed. The last days of the Regency, and the reign of George the Fourth, have done much to sour and spite the old and hereditary good-nature of the English people. The scandalous mismanagement of the Catholic question; the pandering to Protestant prejudices,

without sharing in religious fanaticism, on the part of some of our Tory statesmen; have shaken the faith of the public in the sincerity of public men almost as much as the coalition between Fox and North did fifty years ago. The Whig party must come into power; and even if it chooses not to advocate Reform principles, the Whigs will be necessitated to do so by the mere exigencies of government."

"After all," said I, "it is a very serious thing to change the constitution of a country."

"No doubt," said Maclaurin; "but in England, reformation is the very principle of our constitution. Other constitutions have been fixed and arbitrary, vainly striving for a mechanical regularity and physical permanency, but the British Constitution is elastic and accommodating, and not fettered

down by arbitrary enactments. It contains securities against despotism and slavery; but it has no barriers against the reforms suggested by time and social changes. From *Magna Charta* downwards, our whole history has been that of a progress of reform, social and political. We are, therefore, only following the British law of existence when we undertake at a fitting season, and with thoughtfulness due to its momentous importance, the task of reforming the representation."

"It cannot be denied," said I, "that there is some danger of the democratic party becoming too powerful by the new franchises."

"If England were like any other country, there would be danger, and great danger," said Maclaurin; "but, as I have often observed, our liberty is old, and we are not

parvenus in freedom. A people who have had trial by jury for ages, and such a stirring and ennobling history as Englishmen read from the days of Elizabeth—such a people can be invested with increased power. Besides, they are at heart an aristocratic race—their nobility is open to the brave, the eloquent, and the learned. Not merely an Erskine or Nelson—an orator or a hero—can ennoble his family; but the erudition of an Eldon, and the masculine capacity of a Copley, can enrol their possessors in the patrician order. There is nothing to prevent the head of the commercial house of Baring from becoming a peer; and, doubtless, first-rate commercial talent and influence have as good right (with some restrictions) to the peerage as professional celebrity. Again, what are the bishops but spiritual peers for life? and do we not every

day see some men of the humblest origin rise to honour and dignity in the Church? The career of talent is open to Englishmen, and that career is rendered more fascinating and attractive, because it leads to an association with an ancient and famous order of patricians. The antiquity of the English peerage gives it lustrous glory; and its being open to talent gives it safety from the assaults of the democracy of genius. The great commoner, Pitt, was proud to be Earl of Chatham, just as the Walpoles and Pulteneys took care to fall with dignity upon the peerage."

His friends had for some time been desponding about Maclaurin, as his health gave many symptoms of decay, and though his mind was unclouded, his body evidently was weak with years. He met with an accident that caused his illness to increase,

and he was obliged to confine himself to the house. Having in his early youth studied medicine, which had been his first profession, he was acquainted with all the symptoms of approaching death, and he saw the steps of the great leveller rapidly approach. I often visited him, and I met there Lord John Rowland, who had a sincere veneration for the aged, and, alas! dying philosopher. I could not help feeling interested to know whether Maclaurin would go through any religious manifestation, before his spirit quitted its earthly abode.

One day, when Lord J. Rowland and myself called upon him together, we found him with a large Bible on his reading-desk. He had been reading it, and was in a calm but subdued state of mind. I shall not soon forget his words.

"You see me reading that volume by

which the whole history of the species has been profoundly and intensely affected; that encyclopædia of the sublimest sentiment, and profoundest moral thinking. Alas! it is with feelings of humiliation, I confess that I have put off till now that deliberate, sustained, and searching inquiry, which would enable me to speak with confidence upon the subject of so momentous, I will say, so tremendous, a volume. To exercise my intellect upon history and moral systems, was throughout my life a source of almost voluptuous delight. I revelled in the intellectual, and was never happier than in canvassing social ideas. The external effects of Christianity upon nations, and upon social development, its diffusive and penetrating power—all this I felt enthusiastically, and have even described it exoterically. But the change which I have known

Christianity to effect upon others, that union and entire regeneration of the character, by which trials of every kind are borne with such uncomplaining sweetness, has scarcely been my case. My thinking, my philosophy, my ethical code, run parallel to Christianity, but I grieve to say that I cannot call myself, with perfect sincerity, a Christian, in the sense which the word means in the greater part of Europe. Morality has been my creed—a Christianised morality; but the mystical elements of religion have not entered into my thinking, and the predominance of this exclusively rational faculty has made me sceptical and doubting even to this last scene of all."

"But, my dear Maclaurin," cried Lord J. Rowland, "you may have a considerably longer space of life assigned to you than you suppose, and you might even now attain

to more decided views than you possess, if you only exercised your great faculties."

"Alas! no! *non eadem est ætas non mens.* I am unable now to determine so vast a controversy as you would have me apply myself to. I have now no determined views on the Christian revelation; my mind heaves on a sea of speculation. It is only when I go voyaging in search of a moral code, that I fancy I can see *terra firma.* But the immensity of the religious question, to be determined by the acceptance of the Bible, blinds and puzzles my debilitated power."

He spoke with great simplicity of manner. His face was calmly serene in its expression, and his manner was touchingly subdued.

"Circumstances, Maclaurin," said Lord J. Rowland, "determine the condition of

nearly every mind, even the greatest, though they do not entirely supersede free will or moral power. You were a philosophic sceptic from your youth. Your living at Edinburgh made you one, as you have often confessed to me. You know that during the years when I was an invalid, that I studied theology and moral philosophy, with considerable relish, and with as much industry as my broken health would allow. I confess that though, at first, I was of a sceptical frame of mind, my reason could not withstand the overpowering arguments, in favour of the truth of the facts of Christianity. Surely you do not mean to reject the historical truths of the Bible, confirmed, as they are, by such abundance of testimonies from profane history?"

"It is the doctrine of the Atonement which embarrasses me. The evidences of the lite-

rary truth of the Scriptures are too strong to reject, and I feel that the very fact of the Unitarian and Socinian writers (so bold and daring in their investigations), admitting the fact of the text of the Scriptures, is of itself a remarkable circumstance; for they set up as exclusive Rationalists. But I must confess that the views of the Deity, suggested by the doctrine of the Atonement, seem to me to be gloomy;—a Deity averse from his own creation, and requiring the sacrifice of innocence to appease his wrath."

"Far gloomier, Maclaurin, is the view suggested by Unitarianism. The Socinian worships a careless Deity, a God indifferent to the salvation of the human race. Yes! the God of Unitarianism is a careless being, who did, forsooth, at some time give a faint quivering kind of revelation, and has, after propounding a new code of morality, left

men to be tried by the extreme rigour of that code. The Unitarian or the Rationalising Christian has no Redeemer to worship and cherish—and surely the human heart requires a Redeemer?"

"That is just the point, my dear Lord John. Is the human heart so utterly corrupt that it requires a mysterious atonement for its vices? I have always had an idea that men would be much better if they were not told perpetually that they were so very bad."

"But who tells them so, Maclaurin? *Is it not their own confession, as well as the declaration of the Bible?* Ask the statesman, the scholar, the hero, the artist, the merchant, and will they not all tell the same tale of the vices of human nature; the intense selfishness and thirst for vain-glorious aggrandisement? Surely, your own

observation of life cannot be flattering to your fellow-creatures?"

"I have seen much of the evil of human nature, as every one like me has done, who has lived and moralised on the age of the French Revolution. But surely there are glorious and thrilling natures of splendid human virtue to brighten the page? Look at the King and Queen, heroically meeting death, and resigning themselves to God, with far more quietness and submission than a professed philosopher like myself. See the fidelity of the loyal Malesherbes; the martyr-like courage of the Girondins, dying while singing their songs of patriotism. Need I recount the many instances of public and private virtue displayed throughout that stupendous drama?" He grew faint, and ceased to talk. We were obliged to withdraw, and were both anxious to know

if he could attain to happier and surer views of religion by accepting Revelation, and soaring beyond mere Theism.

I visited Maclaurin every day regularly for some time, and saw a prodigious change come over his mind and thoughts. As death approached nearer and nearer, the dying metaphysician concerned himself only about his personal relation to his Creator. His nights became very painful, and were spent in much uneasiness of body. He became very silent and thoughtful, and I constantly saw the Bible before him. He talked of his own amiable and well-spent life with the greatest humility, and the most touching sincerity, and often reproved himself for not having done more good, while he seemed perfectly unconscious of his very many great and noble qualities.

When he spoke of God, he talked of Him

with more reverence and awe than I had ever witnessed in any person before. His voice fell, as if he were perfectly conscious that he was in bodily presence of a Superior Being, as if he were spell-bound by what has been called "the calm gaze of God." He called me, one day, to read to him the 29th chapter of Job, and it affected him to tears. The character and mission of Our Saviour repeatedly occupied his thoughts; and he constantly spoke upon the subject in the gentlest manner, confessing some of his difficulties upon the manner in which Christ becomes our Saviour.

"I feel such pain," he cried, one day, "that I have begged of God to relieve me from my sufferings." I spoke of the solemnity of death, and Lord J. Rowland, who was present, said "that we ought first to seek of God to be prepared to meet him."

He was silent and thoughtful, and then he answered, "I thought that we might have such perfect confidence in God, that we might venture to make known to him all our thoughts and sufferings, and that He would not be offended; it was in this belief that I asked Him to put an end to my sufferings—with submission, however, I desire to ask it." It had been no habit of Maclaurin to indulge in quotations from the Scriptures, but he now did so frequently, and the words of Holy Writ came with peculiar force from the lips of the dying philosopher.

And so day after day passed, when at length came the last sad scene of all. On one evening, while his friends stood beside his bed, he ceased to speak at all, but his manner was most sweet and gracious, when his medical attendant approached his bed-side. He smiled benignantly on all of us—there

was not the least anxiety about himself discernible, and he seemed glad to see us. His physical pain appeared to cease.

For the last time, he began to speak; his voice was strangely powerful for one in his exhausted state; he looked very thoughtful, weighed all his words carefully; whenever a word from the Scriptures was repeated to him, he seemed deeply touched. Whenever the name of Christ was mentioned, if his eyes were closed, he opened them.

"Jesus Christ loves you," said his affectionate daughter, who had faithfully ministered to him throughout his long illness.

"Jesus Christ—love—the same thing," replied he. Then, after a pause, "I believe——"

"In God?" cried one of his friends, inquiringly. He answered—

"In Jesus."

Once more he spoke, and said that he was happy.

And thus he passed away to the Creator he had adored and feared. When he ceased to breathe, his brow was unruffled, his countenance calmly at repose; and as I gazed on the dead sage, I thought of the lines of Felicia Hemans:—

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Pure spirit, rest thee now—
E'en while on earth thy footsteps trod,
His smile was on thy brow.

"Dust to its narrow house beneath—
Soul to its place on high;
They who have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die."

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER FROM THE LOVED ONE.

One night, after leaving the House of Commons, I found, on arriving at my rooms, a letter, directed in a female hand-writing, which I immediately recognised, though I had seen little of it before. Eager to open the first letter I ever received from Lady Jane, I tore it open, and read as follows:—

"It is with feelings of constraint that I have come to the resolution of writing to you; but I feel that it is imperatively necessary that there should no longer be any misconception between us. I blame myself very much for having allowed you to address me so often as you did; and I really cannot tell why I did not interfere more decidedly to check you. What has occurred since I saw you has, however, finally decided the point, that you must never again, on any account, address yourself to me as you have done upon certain occasions, to which I will not further allude.

"On the very day of your early departure for town, immediately after breakfast was over, my father called me into the library, and he then announced to me that Lord Lingard had arrived with the object of pro-

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posing for me. I was startled at the idea, and still more so when my father entered upon the condition in which our family affairs are placed. I cannot venture to enter upon such topics in writing to one who is not a member of my family; but, at the same time, I have a natural wish, after all that has passed between us, that you should not cherish a harsh, much less a false opinion of one for whom you expressed such sentiments, as I have reason to believe you very sincerely felt. I recollect, too, that you attributed to me the possession of certain qualities, which I should be sorry to be altogether deficient in; and scorning, as I do, the vulgar world of upstart wealth, and *parvenu* pretensions, I should wish to justify myself from harsh recriminations, if I were to give in my own person a melancholy example of the succumbing of truth and

spirit,—perhaps I may add character, over the conquering power of money — aye, money—mere money!

"Knowing, as I do, that I am writing to a gentleman, and feeling in my woman's heart that there are many ties of sympathy between us, I do not hesitate to tell you what has passed between my father and myself. Lord Lingard, you are probably not aware, is by the female side nearly related to us; for a cousin of mine married a sister of Lord Lingard's, with whom he got a large fortune. It seems that Lord Lingard has resolved that, as his brother had died without any family, and that the title expires with its present owner (if without heirs), that he would marry, contrary to what had always been anticipated. My father owes on mortgages to Lord Lingard not less than one hundred and sixty-

four thousand pounds, an immense debt on our reduced fortunes; and Lord Lingard's proposition, made with all the *sang froid* of a merchant upon 'Change, is that, on my marriage with him, he should cancel the bonds for these vast debts, and he further proposes to present me with a gift of one hundred thousand pounds, besides a life annuity of four thousand pounds; and to assign to me his town house, with a vast quantity of plate and a valuable picture gallery. Thus, in case that I should consent to be Lady Lingard, my family would be freed at once from an enormous amount of debt, the interest of which eats up our reduced rent-roll, and the existence of the Mowbrays of Mowbray's Court would be preserved.

"As it is right that you should know both sides of the question, suppose that I, acting

on my natural feelings, resolve to reject Lord Lingard, ruin stares my father in the face! A writ must come, our place will be seized upon, an auction in these venerable walls will be held, the prying gaze of the insolent vulgar—the vulgar high as well as the vulgar low—will scrutinise these chambers, in which we now dwell in the sanctity of private life, breathing in the same apartments where lived and died so many of our celebrated ancestry. I cannot trust myself to describe the feelings of anguish, amounting to horror, with which I contemplate such a dire event. The calamity would crush my father's spirit; for, alas! (and I say it with all reverence for my beloved parent's grey hairs), my father, like most statesmen, has an extremely worldly mind. For myself I can say with truth, that though I am too proud to beg, I should not be

ashamed to earn my bread by the exercise of any talents I may possess. But the thought of my ancient family, that has for centuries flourished within the time-honoured walls of Mowbray's Court being driven in shame from the dwelling-place of their forefathers, and compelled to take up their abode in some obscure domicile—the very thought of such a catastrophe would be insupportably afflicting. When the far-descended aristocracy of the Faubourg St. Germain were driven from Paris in misery, their affliction was national, and the sight of illustrious victims to political misfortunes gave them the example of a community of suffering; but when a family like mine should fall, it would sink by itself, and the ignominy would therefore be greater. What therefore can I do in such a dilemma as that in which I am placed, but consent

to victimise myself—a lot which, however painful and shocking to me in some respects, still must be consented to by me? Let the world say what it please, I shall have the consolation of knowing that I have acted according to my sentiments of duty; and having the fortunes of the family of the Mowbrays in my hands, I resign my own chances of happiness, and consent to rescue my family from ruin at the expense even of shipwrecking my personal happiness.

"Under such circumstances, it is only right that you should never again address me as you have done heretofore, and that you should give up your desire of paying addresses to one who, whatever may be the opinion she may have entertained of your character and talents, feels that she would be acting with want of candour if she did not lay before you the exact nature of the

case, trusting to your personal honour for secrecy upon the subjects alluded to.

"Wishing you the enjoyment of your political ambition, and feeling assured that you have it in your own power to obtain happiness in life, believe me,

"Sincerely yours,

"JANE MOWBRAY."

I read this letter more than once before I laid it down. It fell upon my mind with dreary and disheartening effect, from the frankness with which she spoke of the affairs of her family, and the ruin which impended over the Mowbrays. I saw in a moment that my happiness was imperilled by the contents of her letter. My fancy had indulged in visions of future happiness, and my mind had revelled in anticipations of possessing her whom I so admired. I now

saw that I had little chance of calling Lady Jane my own. My fortune was not worth speaking of to such a man as Lord Mowbray. I had scarcely fifteen hundred pounds per annum, and without reckoning on official promotion, my whole income was never likely to exceed two thousand pounds a-year. On the other hand, supposing that Lady Jane was in love with me, it was extremely—nay, entirely improbable that with Lady Jane's strong feelings of family pride, and with her keenly sentimental appreciation of the historic grandeur of her family, that she would yield to her affections, and sacrifice her family on the altar of love. I foresaw that she would rather give up in this world all her chance of domestic happiness, in order that the broad lands and grey walls of Mowbray's Court should still be handed down to remote generations of her

kindred, than that she should have a lover in the husband of her choice.

For my own part, I felt almost pleased by the letter. Since the time that I had become intimate with Lady Jane, politics had lost their peculiar charms for me, and I heard without emotion the struggles of the party to which I was attached. It had been sneeringly said of me, that there was more of the philosopher than the patriot in my composition, and that I was not alive to public feelings. People did not know that a strong and intensely personal affection had cast its spell over my mind, and they supposed that I was insensible, while in reality I was absorbed by passionate feelings. So little can we see of each other's hearts!

I answered Lady Jane's letter in a deprecatory manner, remonstrating with her upon the rashness and utter impossibility of her

sacrificing herself for her family, and vented my feelings as well as I could. But the language trickled coldly from my pen, which was paralysed by my knowing, from the wild stock of pride which was deeply grafted on Lady Jane Mowbray's nature, that it was only too likely she would fling her personal happiness to the winds, when the alternative of her family's ruin or her own pleasure was placed before her. I knew that she would act with haughty heroism the part of a martyr aristocrat. The fact of her elder brother having married a dowerless beauty, who brought no fortune to the Mowbrays, confirmed me further in that view.

CHAPTER V.

SENATORIAL STRUGGLES—DISAPPOINTMENT.

It was in no enviable feelings that I strolled in next night to the Sheridan Club, to get a cup of coffee, and look at the evening papers. In a return from the dining room was a kind of snuggery, with a fire-place, a select library, and a table covered with the journals; and hither a

member would resort when he did not wish to go into the select library up stairs, where the regular *habitués* of the club were most accustomed to take their tea or coffee. While seated in the snuggery, one could sip his coffee, and enjoy a chat with the late diners at some of the tables which adjoined the recess. The dining-room presented that evening the usual miscellany of diners at the club. The octogenarian Templar prating of old times; the gay young Guardsmen, riotous with health and good spirits, recruiting themselves with the homely dinner of cold roast beef, washed down with champagne, to the amazement of a dyspeptic glutton near them, who was in a fidget about his succession of Kickshaws; a couple of snoring Members of Parliament, and a young literary lord, trying to look wise and indifferent after being castigated by all the

critical journals—such was the company that met my eye. I took up the *Globe*, and read, with some surprise, amongst the fashionable intelligence:—"The Earl of Mowbray and Lady Jane Mowbray have arrived at Ashendon on a visit to Lady Musgrave." I had scarcely read the paper, when one of the company in the dining-room called aloud to one of the prosy M.P.'s.:—

"By the bye, Adeane, is that true about Lady Jane Mowbray going to be married to Lord Lingard?"

"Why—really—Sir George, I can't say; but Hardinge here knows more about it than I do, as he is acquainted with Lord Lingard, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing."

"All I can say on the subject," said Mr. Hardinge, "is, that Lord Lingard chuckles

and laughs when quizzed upon the subject. Lady Jane has a very small fortune, and it is reported that her rich suitor has a very splendid settlement, which, of course, she marries him for. Lord Lingard has been a great deal of late with his solicitor in Gray's Inn—that I know to be a fact; and I am quite certain that the whole affair is settled."

"Well," said Sir George Wigram, "it is certainly an extraordinary match. For a high-spirited girl like Lady Jane, it is a most strange *freak*. She is one of the proudest women in England, and I can scarcely conceive her consenting to be united with so gross a character, and so plebeian a nature, as Lord Lingard—a man whom all the honours of the peerage could not redeem from the arrant ignobility of his character."

"Money, money, Sir George," replied

Mr. Adeane, "will do anything in this commercial age. I should not wonder if we lived to see the times when kings themselves would set up courting heiresses, and lord it over folk in the city with the purse-proud pomposity of 'Majesty and Co.'"

"Lady Jane," chimed in Mr. Hardinge, "can scarcely be so high-spirited a woman as is supposed, else she never would degrade herself to a marriage with Lord Lingard."

"I can hardly believe in the affair," said Sir George Wigram; "but I have known Lady Jane from a child, and a more bold or generous nature, with a more frank or amiable character, bating some *hauteur* and *fierté* of manner, does not exist among all the titled women of England."

My heart throbbed as I listened to this conversation, spoken aloud across the dining-room of the Sheridan Club. I could

scarcely believe my senses; my firse impulse was to rush home and order my saddle horse, and ride off to Wycombe Hall. I was in the act of leaving the room, when I heard a quick step on the stairs, and a hasty voice exclaimed—

"Is Mr. Wynville in the Club?" It was Lucas, the whipper-in of the Whigs, who came breathless, and told me to go down at once to the House; that I was wanted to speak; that a question had suddenly come on, upon which it was well known that I had a great deal of knowledge, ready for use. He caught me by the arm, and told me that I should lose no time, and laughed in my face when I doubted whether I should go.

"Pooh! man, you will ruin yourself if you do not attend. Lord Althorp referred us especially to you half an hour since, and

told us that he had a long talk with you on this subject yesterday, and he says that you must reply."

With my head thinking of very different matters from politics, I was dragged, *nolens volens*, into the House of Commons. Penrose was just about to speak, and one of the Whig leaders beckoned to me when I appeared, and said with a decisive air that I should reply to Penrose. In a few minutes, Penrose was upon his legs, and rattled off one of his most brilliant and vivacious speeches. It bristled with quotations, was spicy with anecdote, and was cleverly sarcastic, and most agreeable. It kept the attention of the House awake, and while enforcing conviction, it attacked the sentiments of one of the great parties into which the Commons was divided, with so much felicity and power that the brilliant effect

could scarcely have been excelled. It was a capital speech for a young member, and Penrose, on sitting down, was unanimously held to be "a deuced clever fellow."

No sooner did he resume his seat amidst a buzz of approbation, than I rose mechanically, and was thrilled when I heard my name eagerly cried by several of my party, who expected that I should annihilate Penrose. There was a dead silence in the House, and though I had often spoken before, it seemed to me that I never knew what silence was until I saw the calm attention in the countenances of all the members at both sides, and perceived that the House was still expecting that I should prove a worthy competitor with Penrose. My mouth felt dry and parched, though I had drunk some refreshment at

Bellamy's before going in. My head felt quite muddled, and I had a sensation about my brain such as I had never before, and hope I shall never feel again. I felt that I could not think—as if my memory were suddenly clogged, and my logical perception suddenly blinded. I blurted out some facts in a hesitating, mumbling way; I made a desperate lunge upon some statistical tables, and mutilated the argument beyond the logical power of an Archbishop Whately to re-set in proper shape. I hesitated; then went on; stopped for a moment; heard a loud and disheartening cry of "Hear! hear!" from pitying members, mingled with a mocking "Yaw! yaw!" from the opposite benches. I saw a smile on one face; a sneer on another, and disappointment on several. Again I made a desperate effort to go on, but I felt

as if I were paralysed, and disquieted and sick at heart, sat down in a mingled state of heavy, great, and bitter discomfiture.

Even then my very first thoughts were of Lady Jane, and I could face the disgrace of my failure in confronting Penrose. It was my evil fate in seeing one whom I so loved taken from me, and contracted to a man like Lord Lingard, that weighed on my mind. I walked out of the House immediately, and really cared very little about the cold looks of surprise that were visible on so many of the Whig faces. I returned to my home, and had my groom knocked up, and to his great surprise ordered my riding horse to be got ready, as I was resolved to set out at once for Wycombe Hall, and endeavour to have a private talk with Lady Jane, at Ashendon. The

idea of taking a lonely ride by night not a little astonished my servants, but I felt in the very gloom of the night that my spirits were better than by the garish day.

The firmament was decked with stars,—the vault of heaven glittered with constellations. I felt upon me a strange kind of excitement, as I thought of the imminent peril in which my happiness was placed by my failure in winning Lady Jane. My mind was in a kind of fever, and I asked myself again and again, "Is this a dream? Or is this reality?"

During that lonely ride at midnight, I scarcely gave a passing thought to the scene in the House of Commons in which I had figured with so little credit—so completely had the passion of love conquered the passion of personal ambition.

I arrived at Wycombe Hall early in the

morning, and the domestics there were surprised at my sudden appearance. I dressed myself, walked out in the cool air, and strolled in the direction of the waterfall at which I had first made to Lady Jane a declaration of my affection for her. The scene recalled all my dreams of love, and again suggested to my imagination the charms of the bewitching beauty whose fascinating qualities had so strongly attracted me, and had acted on my soul with such powerful effect. Sadly I thought of all the idle and unsubstantial dreams of happiness which had floated through my fancy, and in pensive strain I returned to the house.

I sat down to breakfast in a calmer state of mind; the morning sun was streaming through the casement, with the sweet odour of flowers, and the song of the birds glad-

dened my spirits, and revived me with new feelings. I dreamed a joyous dream again, and I could not help fancying how delightful it would be if I could call Lady Jane my own, and saw her seated opposite to me at table on that fine spring morning, as a husband listening to her conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARTYR BEAUTY.

But it was no time for dreaming. I rose after breakfast, refreshed by the country air, and with new energy of mind. I resolved to repair without delay to Ashendon, and try if I could have a private conversation with Lady Jane. I ordered my groom to be ready with the horses, and

found myself at eleven o'clock on the road to Ashendon.

I stopped at some of my tenants' houses on the way, and talked politics and corn laws with the farmers, and affected an interest that I did not feel in matters of practical agriculture, and, with a grave, earnest face, listened to two long lectures on short-horns and South-downs. I arrived at noon at Lady Musgrave's, and sent in my name.

Lady Musgrave was crossing the hall when I entered the house, and there was unaffected pleasure in her face when she saw me.

"I am so glad, Mr. Wynville, that you have come, for we have been so stupid these couple of days. Lady Jane and I are all alone, as Lord Mowbray is gone to Yorkshire upon some business with Lord Lingard,

and we do not expect him back for a week, and we have not seen anybody these two days, with the bad weather. Pray, come in."

So saying, she led the way into the drawing-room, in which there was no one at the time.

"You will excuse me for two or three min—minutes," said the stuttering Lady Musgrave. "I have some di—directions to give to my steward, and I will have you announced to Lady Jane, who will, I am sure, be glad to see you."

So saying, Lady Musgrave left the room, and I was alone. Lying open on one of the tables was an album, which I took up, and saw written in the fly-leaf "Jane Mowbray." It was full of sketches from nature, drawn with the boldness and force which marked Lady Jane's pencil. I turned eagerly over the

drawings, and admired them with the enthusiasm of a lover of nature and an ardent lover of the artist. There was an admirable drawing of Mowbray's Court itself, a portrait of her father, and of her uncle the bishop. There was also a sketch of Mr. Canning, drawn from life, as he lay upon a sofa in the library at Mowbray's Court, absorbed in the perusal of some political papers. There also I beheld from the same pencil a lively sketch of the hearty and shrewd face of Sir Walter Scott. All the family at Kingsleigh were sketched, and admirably grouped together. I could not help wondering at the singular versatility and skill of Lady Jane's pencil, when, as I was turning over the leaves, I was caught by the representation of a scene which seemed very familiar to me. It was a small landscape, in pencil, of my own achievement in landscape garden-

ing! There were the waterfall, and the rock-work, and the rustic bridge, and the arbour, and the weeping willows! Written under in faint pencilling, so slight that it was difficult to decipher the words, I read "sketched from memory." Aye! this was the very scene where I had first made love to this lovely artist, and proud was I to find that the spot had left so warm an impression on her memory. I felt a strange kind of pleasure in knowing that my landscape gardening had been deemed worthy of commemoration by such a pencil as Lady Jane handled.

With feelings of gratification, I was examining the picture, and resolved to ask Lady Jane for a copy of this sketch which I so much prized, when one of the French windows that looked upon an old garden, quaintly laid out, was pushed in from the outside, and in walked, in a white muslin morning

dress, Lady Jane herself. She came upon me with so much surprise, and her appearance, radiant with beauty (notwithstanding a certain pensive air and more subdued manner than was habitual to her), so electrified me that I did not speak, but with hushed utterance gazed upon the lovely apparition. She wore upon her head a straw hat, with a wide flap, and her hair hanging down on her shoulders. Her muslin robe was cut low, and revealed her throat and neck of faultless chiselling. She held in her hand some flowers which she had plucked, and not perceiving that any one was in the apartment, she turned to shut the window, when I broke silence.

"Lady Jane——"

Scarcely were the words out of my mouth, when she started with an exclamation of surprise, and looked towards me

with a mingled expression of wonder and alarm, which changed into a pleasurable smile as I advanced towards her. As I took her hand, she blushed to the temples.

"Why have you come hither!" she said, eagerly, and with a tremulous tone, that told me; plainer than words could speak, that I had not been an object of indifference to her, and that I had made a strong impression on her heart. "I thought that you were in London, discharging your parliamentary duties at this stormy time."

"I was in London early this morning, and I came here suddenly; when I read in the journals that you had left Mowbray's Court and were sojourning here, I longed to have some conversation with you; and I hope that we shall be able to have a talk together."

"Nay, I have told you already that you

must not revert to former conversations; there is no use in it, and it would be impossible for us here to have any private discourse."

The door opened, and in came Lady Musgrave.

"Ah! so you are there, Jane. I was looking for you up stairs. Well, Mr. Wynville, you must prom—promise me to stay and dine with me to-day. My niece has been confined for these last two days to the house, and she wants a canter about the country. Pray be her escort across the hills, and on to the common, and return for dinner here. I am not able myself to leave Ashendon to-day, as I have some business to look about."

"I shall be very happy to accept the honour of escorting Lady Jane in her morning ride; but I really have not come in dress for dining out with ladies."

"Pooh! you can despatch your groom for your dinner costume; but pray, consent to my proposal, for Lady Jane wants a gallop across the hills after being buried in the bad weather. I will order luncheon, and then you must start off for the common together."

Lady Jane left the room to make her riding toilette, and she appeared soon again. We had some idle *badinage* while at luncheon, and Lady Musgrave, who, for one of the Mowbrays, was singularly slow in perception, never suspected that it was an ardent lover of her niece who was seated at her table, that praised her drawings with so much vivacity.

I assisted Lady Jane to mount her steed, and soon we were trotting together over one of the retired roads in the vicinity of Ashendon. Presently we drew up, as if by mutual consent.

"Lady Jane, the letter which I received from you—"

"Must," said she, interrupting me, "have given you a very unfavourable opinion of me."

"Its effect was exactly the reverse. I longed more than ever to have an opportunity of addressing you upon the subject dearest to my heart—the place you occupy in my affections—"

"Mr. Wynville, is this fair—is this justice to me, after the frank and not unkind manner in which I have treated you?"

"Would you have me silent at a time when my happiness for life is upon the issue—when the crisis of my domestic joy, or domestic misery, is at hand? I cannot, Lady Jane, be silent. I cannot stifle my emotions. My feelings would subdue me at such a time; and now that we are alone,

I must declare, that your conduct in sacrificing yourself a victim to your family at the altar, is contrary to every high sense of duty."

"No, Mr. Wynville; but it is consonant with every sense of duty that I owe to my honoured father, and his hairs grey with anxiety—to the memory of my high-spirited mother [and her voice faltered as she spoke] —to the fame of a long line of forefathers—aye, to the past renown, to the present credit, and future prosperity of the house of Mowbray. What! do you think me such a tame and dejected piece of womanhood, that I would not sacrifice my own happiness —my dearest personal delights, sooner than see the family in which I was born tumble to the dust—its heritage given to strangers —its heirlooms handed about by greedy purchasers of *virtu*—its historical relics pa-

raded to the gaze of loungers and dabblers in dusty specimens of antiquity? Think you, forsooth, that I would consent to count of myself and of my personal happiness, when the voices of the dead and of the living, when the fate of the Mowbrays of England [her eye flashed while she spoke], imperiously call upon me to save their honour? Why, the very walls—the grey, time-honoured walls of Mowbray's Court, would totter to entomb me, if at such a time I were a degenerate daughter of my high race—a pusillanimous being, dead to all soul-stirring sentiment, and wrapped up in my own selfish ease!"

"Alas! Lady Jane, you deceive yourself strangely. You are about, under mistaken sentiments, to act a tragic part indeed, when still higher feelings than those you have uttered must prompt you to yield to

the voice of nature, which bids you recoil from the addresses of Lord Lingard."

"Sir—Mr. Wynville—you forget what is due to my feelings, to my character, and to my sex."

"No!—no! a thousand times no! dearest Lady Jane; I would not breathe a word that would savour of harshness; but it is you who are unjust to your character and sex, in forswearing the purest passion of love, and in sacrificing yourself to Lord Lingard's feelings of mere aristocratic pride. But you never loved me. I deceived myself; no, you could not have returned the love I felt for you, else you would never have cast yourself down, a victim to a pile of gold!"

She turned upon me her face, which bore an expression stern as if she had been suddenly changed into marble. Her eyes

flashed, though her lips were compressed and motionless. She looked at me with something like scorn, but mingled with anguish. In subdued voice she broke forth.

"Ungrateful—ungenerous—unkind! Is this the language due from one whom I have treated with such confidence? It was I who was deceived in you. No one who really loved me could have spoken to me as you have done. Your charge that I never loved you, and that I am now fickle (for thus I interpret your comments on my conduct) is untrue as it is unjust. But I have deserved all this in allowing you to test my feelings too plainly. I did, Mr. Wynville, like your society, and I was partial to your conversation; nay, I believe that I distinguished you even by my manner towards you; this was right and proper in one in my position. I will not conceal that you had

gained a high place in my affections, and that you had influenced my thoughts in a mode in which they are not likely again to be moved, for such feelings do not occur twice in life. The character which I had heard of you from your friends; your undoubted talents, and I may add your attractive manners—all these won upon me, and caused me to feel towards you in a manner which makes the injustice of your language more galling to me, and which compels me to think that you are unworthy of that place in my esteem which you had once. Oh! Mr. Wynville, you little know how bitterly I have repented in secret the lengths to which I have allowed you to go, in making a declaration of your feelings to me. It has added to the bitterness of my sufferings from this marriage forced upon me by the most imperious necessity. Alas!

it was my woman's weakness which was won by your addresses, and I had not power to conceal my opinion of you; and I feel sore indeed at finding that you impute to me the part of a dissembler, and insinuate that my avarice only was aroused."

"Nay, Lady Jane! it is you who do me injustice. I never meant to insinuate aught against you; but in seeing you cast yourself away upon Lord Lingard, I only doubted whether you really had affection for me such as I have felt for you; for, if our conditions were changed, I assure you that I would cast away the fortunes of my family, rather than forego for ever the prospect of calling you my own. Until I saw and knew you, I was the very slave of mere political ambition. I never thought of aught else but fame and glory. I was rapidly earning distinction in Par-

liament, and my ambition to figure in the House of Commons ceased with the more powerful desire of obtaining your affections. But now I care not for political success, or worldly fame, since I have no chance of winning your hand; and if you knew the extent to which you have won my affections, you might feel certain that I could never dream of saying a word that could annoy you."

I then described to her the scene in the House of Commons, when I had failed in my reply to Penrose, and I told her how careless and indifferent I had become about the applause of my party, and how her image engrossed all my mind. My words produced much effect on her, and I could see that she was inwardly agitated.

"You little know," she said, "how much I have suffered of late, and what you say

only increases the trouble of my mind; but there is no help for it. Unless I marry Lord Lingard, the family is ruined. I hold its fortunes in my hand, and I should never have happiness in this world if I were to please myself merely, and never think of the happiness of those who are endeared to me by all the ties of nature and affection. There is no way of escaping this marriage. My father looks upon it as certain, and I have given my consent to it. By doing so, my family will be released from considerable embarrassment—in plain language, preserved from total ruin."

"And what, Lady Jane, will become of you? What will become of your own happiness?"

"I shall, at least, have done my duty to others."

"But not to yourself."

"Nay, it is quite useless to go over again this topic. My step has been decided upon."

"And is it right to immolate yourself and your affections, and to wed where you have no love?"

"I am no casuist, Mr. Wynville; I can only act upon such a terrible emergency as nature herself prompts me. Perish my own happiness, so that of my family is preserved! Perish my hope of domestic comfort, provided I know that the dear old walls of Mowbray's Court will be safe from the profane touch of the auctioneer, and from the prying gaze of the unfeeling vulgar!" And she shuddered while she spoke.

"But," said I, "let me know from you, whether, if it were possible to save the fortunes of the family without descending to the tremendous sacrifice of your affections; if property by some other means

were restored to your ancient house, would you then accept the hand of Arthur Wynville?"

"Why ask me such a question? And why torture me with an imaginary case that can never occur? I have only given you too many proofs of my regard for you, in the confidence with which I have spoken to you often, and in the unreserved conversations which I have not debarred you from. Indeed it was to me some gratification to think that I had at least one person who could thoroughly appreciate my character, in acting as I have determined to do—one person, I say, who could judge by the nature of my feelings, how agonising must have been the conflict in my mind, before I thus resolved to give up all regard for my own private comfort and happiness."

"I know," said I, "the nature of your

character, and your character more even than your beauty has enthralled me. And even if you be torn from me by fate, I can at least for ever possess the gratification of knowing that I was honoured with your" —(love, I was going to say)—but she, interrupting, said, "Friendship." "Well then," exclaimed I, "let it be friendship; I can never forget the delightful hours that I have passed in your company at Mowbray's Court. Through life the sweet memory of them will dwell in my mind, through life I can never forget the time when my affections found an object that made me deaf to the call of ambition, and concentrated on itself all my desires and expectations."

"Let us," she cried, "have no more of this. It is too painful, and there is no use in indulging these feelings. What must be—must be. You and I shall have to cease

thinking of each other, as we might have done. We shall be, I trust, always friends, and we shall often meet in the intercourse of social life. I shall be at the head of a splendid mansion in the West End, and shall be envied by thousands! Aye! *envied*—ha! ha! what a world we live in! Then I shall live in a blaze of wealth and fashion; my receptions will be crowded, and I shall have an admirable opportunity of studying characters of all kinds. The lions of the day will frequent my parties, and I shall have the pleasure of seeing a certain young gentleman pointed out as one of the leading parliamentary orators of the day. Nay, Mr. Wynville, you and I shall be very good friends, and I shall always rejoice to hear of your successes in life; and the world—the great, hard, harsh, unfeeling world—shall never know of the

passages that took place in our lives, by which we became interested in each other's lots. Come, let us urge our steeds, and gallop across this wild common, and banish care from our brows."

I thought I saw her brush her hand across her eyes as she spoke, while she affected to settle her riding-hat. We galloped rapidly onward, and spoke not a word to each other. When we pulled up, as I was about to renew the subject of our conversation, she with a peremptory waive of her hand cried—"No more! No more! We have had enough of talk about it to-day, and let us change the subject." She refused to re-open the conversation about herself, and I was compelled to talk about indifferent matters until we returned to Ashendon.

CHAPTER VII.

HEART PANGS AND SOUL STRUGGLINGS.

No one who looked at Lady Jane and myself as we rode up the avenue to Lady Musgrave's, could ever have supposed that we had held such a stirring conversation in which the happiness of both parties was an object of discussion. Lady Jane appeared joyously calm and happy, and conversed

with apparent ease and cheerfulness. On arriving at Ashendon House, we found that there was a letter from Lord Mowbray, from London, desiring that Lady Jane should upon the next morning repair to London, as he wished to speak to her on business of importance. There was also a letter to Lady Musgrave, desiring that Lady Jane should on no account be detained at Ashendon.

Lady Jane gave me a quiet glance, full of meaning, as Lady Musgrave prattled about her going up to town. Having taken a longer ride than we had intended, dinner was waiting, and though I was inclined to leave for Wycombe Hall, as I supposed that in the course of the evening, I should have an opportunity of some private talk with Lady Jane, still at her desire I countermanded my groom, and agreed to dine

according to my promise in the morning. There was no additional company at the table with ourselves, and we had a quiet stupid meal. I never was so dull at a table before, and as I looked upon the lovely form of Lady Jane, in an amber silk robe, I actually felt a ferocious hatred of Lord Lingard, and a strange desire to break off the intended marriage of Lady Jane, and carry her off in triumph as my own.

After dinner, Lady Jane proposed a turn in the garden terrace. Lady Musgrave made no objection, but when we were actually in the garden, the old lady felt cold, and returned to order tea, declining to accompany us further for fear of catching cold.

"How is it possible," said I, "that we can meet in London?"

"It would be vain for us to try and have

an opportunity of further converse, even if there were any use in it. My father, as you are aware," continued Lady Jane, "has no town house, and we generally stay at a hotel, or at one of our relative's, when we visit London. My father is now staying at one of the Jermyn-street hotels, and it would be useless for you to try and have a conversation with me in such a place. Besides, I wish really that you would cease to talk of a matter which must be finally banished from both our minds. It is quite impossible that we can be united, for I have determined to save my family, and to sacrifice myself for them; and all I can hope to achieve is to have my marriage with Lord Lingard put off for a short time, until I steel my mind to the requisite firmness for enduring the lot to which I am doomed."

"But are you quite certain that your

family will be secured from ruin by your marriage with Lord Lingard?"

"My father is quite sure of that point. The enormous debt due to Lord Lingard will be cancelled by the marriage, and a free gift of a hundred thousand pounds presented to myself, besides a jointure of four thousand a-year. And Lord Lingard holds out a variety of other inducements to my father, of no mean consideration. He will take upon himself the political expenses of my elder brother, now at Rome, and start him for the shire at the next election. In short, the match with Lord Lingard will preserve the Mowbrays."

"And have you no scruple about the propriety of the solemn tie you are contracting with one whom you cannot love?"

"Take care what you say upon that point. You may be certain that I shall

behave to Lord Lingard with respect and duty, and that I shall conduct myself with the most severe and scrupulous care. The world shall never know the canker at my heart. I will smile and look joyous, and act the part of a fashionable lady as gracefully, and with as much dignity, as I can. In short, I will bear my lot with religious resignation."

"I can scarcely believe my senses as I stand upon this terrace, and hear what you say of sacrificing yourself."

"Because you do not know the ardour with which a woman can embrace the cause of those endeared to her by the holiest ties of nature, and because you do not make allowance for the historical sentiment with which I contemplate my family. Ah! but there is another reason, Mr. Wynville, why I am calmly resolved to go through the

painful ordeal before me. I have a religious sense of the insecurity of all earthly happiness. This world, I feel, was never intended as the final resting-place of our hopes, and I have never looked upon it as a scene where perfect happiness can be attained. Its glories I have long ceased to idolise, and I think duty the highest idea that can enter into human thought. Feeling as I do upon the vanity of life, I can the more readily render a religious sacrifice to my family."

"Then you idolise the pride and glory of your family like a mere votary of the world?"

"Come—come; none of your metaphysics, Mr. Wynville—we women are not learned logicians, like barristers and speakers in Parliament; I was only laying before you the real state of my mind, when

I told you that human life seems to me dashed in all its scenes with so much pain and misery, that I the more readily forego the prospect of earthly happiness to myself, in consenting to a marriage from which, if a free agent, I should certainly recoil. Let me, however, have the satisfaction of feeling that I possess in you a friend who will, at least, appreciate the motives which guide my conduct. For what the mere gossiping and idle world may say, I care but little. They will talk of me as a common-place young lady, dazzled by a large fortune and a fine settlement, and the prospect of social power. And let them talk on. I shall feel tranquil in my own heart, with the consciousness that I have liberated my family from the pressure of vast difficulties, and that in my own person I have contributed to the stability of the fortunes of those who dwell in Mowbray's Court."

"You are then utterly deaf to all that I have urged upon you, and will not listen to my prayers."

"It is in vain for you to talk further. Henceforward we must only be friends—aye! friends, and nothing more. You can easily meet with some one else in whom your affections will centre" (her voice faltered).

"No! No! Never, Lady Jane, will I wed any woman but you. It is you alone who first brought me to feel the passion of love—and with no other woman will I ever wed. Aye! and recal but this, that you are dooming me to a life of disappointment, for I care not for politics; and since I have been defeated in my hope of winning you as my bride, the world has a dreary aspect in my eyes."

"Oh! that is mere momentary vexation.

One who aims at being a statesman like you must be made of sterner stuff than to become such a sentimentalist as to turn misanthrope because a great rich lord carries off your 'ladye love.'"

"Nay! you little know the hold you have on my affections, and you are not aware of the influence which you have exercised upon my imagination. You describe yourself as being powerfully controlled by the historical sentiment you feel for your famous and time-honoured family. You confess that your imagination is deeply affected by the spectacle of the tottering fortunes of the proud house of Mowbray. Well, Lady Jane, in the same way my imagination has been roused and excited by the witchery of your beauty, and by the mingled brilliancy of your accomplishments, deriving fresh grace from the originality of your character."

"Mr. Wynville, no more of this, I entreat you! I positively forbid you to speak any more in this strain. I will not hear it. In the circumstances in which I am placed, it would be quite improper to listen to such language coming from one who can never be entitled, even by the prospect of a matrimonial alliance, in thus addressing one who forbids his flattering her, while she is most affected by the marks of his—of his—friendship. You are a gentleman, and surely inherit the spirit and nature of one, and I am sure that you are entirely of too manly a nature to trespass upon my feelings in the very peculiar position in which I now stand. I consider myself as belonging to another, and I am no longer at liberty to converse with you in such freedom as I could have once allowed. Therefore forbear to resume the strain of conversation in which you

have been now indulging. Our lot is an unhappy one, but it must be borne with patience; and for my part I have the sentiment of duty to my family to uphold me, and cheer me in the determination I have taken."

"At least let me know," said I, "how I can meet you in London."

"There is no necessity for our meeting at all; but in the intercourse of society we shall often meet, and I hope to have the pleasure of congratulating you upon your triumphs in the House of Commons, and on the gratification of your political ambition."

"But I mean now, when you go to town on this visit, can you not see me?"

"Certainly not; our intercourse must cease henceforth. This must be the last communication we hold together in private."

"Nay! you will not surely refuse to see me again?"

"I *must*, Mr. Wynville; for after what has passed, and knowing as I do the future which lies before me, I should be very culpable if I indulged in the pleasure of your society any more."

"I can scarcely believe that you will—"

"The determination is made not without pain, I assure you."

"But hear—"

"No! no! Mr. Wynville; enough has been said by you, and enough, and more than enough, has been felt by me. In taking leave of these conversations I wish you, from my heart, much happiness, and that your life may be crowned with the success that your talents deserve; and now," said she, "no more, I beg, no more of this." And while she spoke she turned

her head away to hide her emotion, while her voice faltered. Suddenly turning round, she moved in the direction of the house, and walked on rapidly before.

I felt miserable in that lovely garden; and the soft calm air, with the voices of a thousand birds, and the glories of the setting sun, were disregarded by me. I felt dulled and disheartened beyond aught that I could have fancied. The utter impossibility of my being able to prevent the marriage of Lady Jane; my own want of large fortune to enable me to give her a worldly pretext to her family for her union with me: these difficulties were painfully present to my mind, and I saw that it was useless to persevere in the expectation of winning her as my bride. Slowly I returned to Ashendon House, which she had entered some minutes before me, while I was pacing the

garden walks in gloomy and disconsolate mood.

As I entered the hall outside the tea-room, I heard Lady Musgrave observe—

"I am surprised that he did not tell us of the scene in Parliament, and I am so sorry that the p—p—paper abuses him so; do not let him see it."

I guessed that there was some severe paragraph about me in some of the popular journals, and that my failure of the night before was alluded to. On entering the tea-room, I found Lady Musgrave with her niece, and the evening paper was lying before them. I took it up—saying I supposed that I came in for some abuse by having failed to please my party on the night before—and saw my name vilified with scorn as having been utterly unequal to reply to the accomplished Penrose. "A

month ago, I was a prodigy in the eyes of the people who are doubtless now tearing my reputation to pieces. Such is popular applause!" said I, smiling and looking at Lady Jane.

"Oh!" remarked Lady Musgrave, "you are too sensible to mind the abuse of the newspapers; they have really become dreadfully censorious of late."

"I have something more serious to hurt me than the censure of hostile journals," I was commencing to say, when I observed that Lady Jane was looking at me with an anxious face; so I said no more, but turned the conversation away to another topic. Perceiving that Lady Jane was out of spirits, and that Lady Musgrave was fidgetty about her journey to town in the morning, I hastened to take an early leave, after having made two or three fruitless attempts

to ascertain whether Lady Jane would allow me to visit her during her sojourn in town.

I slept that night at Wycombe, but the first thing I did in the evening was to order horses for town, where I arrived the next day about noon.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRANBY CUMBERLAND—A NEGLECTED POET.

So much occupied was I with the idea of Lady Jane becoming the bride of another, and so profoundly was I affected at the idea of my happiness being clouded, that I turned deaf ears to all the calls of political duty. Nor did the remarks made on my failure in the House of Commons disconcert me;

because I well knew from experience that, if my mind had been at ease, I should have been able to vindicate my reputation. The questions which were put to me by the leaders of my party about the cause of my break-down in reply to Penrose were treated by me with *nonchalance*, and I met with indifference the tone of disappointment in which I was spoken to by the zealots of faction, and was myself the first to laugh at the abuse of me in the journals of the opposite party.

The next day after my arrival from Wycombe, while I was lounging over breakfast, Cumberland came in to me. Since the death of his wife his appearance had changed. He had become more calm and composed, and his bearing was different from the haggard, unhappy man whom I had known in such a state of despondency;

and the gloom of a disconsolate, broken-down dandy is the most disagreeable and dreary of human sensations. He had now become composed, and, if not contented, was at least peaceful in his mind.

"I came," said he, "to ask what you are about? I know that you are looking ill; and excuse me for saying it, your attendance at the House of Commons is negligent, and your exertions for your party are not made with their wonted vigour. It is now my turn to offer you the sympathy of a friend."

"Pooh! Cumberland, as you know yourself, from experience, we cannot be always the masters of our feelings. Fits of laziness and apathy quickly follow upon bursts of enthusiasm and energy. The human mind passes rapidly from a torrid to a frigid feeling."

"Nay! but you seem not at ease so much as you were. I heard a friend of yours, and a lady, remarking on it the other night."

"And who was the lady, pray?"

"It was Miss Dormer, the actress."

"Was it in the green-room that you were talking to her?"

"No; I was spending the evening with her at a small party given by her, to which you had been invited, and to which you were not polite enough to send an answer."

"I forgot all about it. But, Cumberland, what are *you* about? and let me now inquire how you are combatting the world?"

"I am studying for the bar, and am making close acquaintance with Chitty, and am getting on intimate terms with Judge Blackstone."

"Bravo! that's the way to go in and win. With your personal advantages, your strong voice and vigorous body, and keen, sharp mind, you will doubtless become an excellent advocate, and in time will ripen into a sound lawyer. But what dreary work it is poring over those dull books of forms!"

"By Jove! it is dull as a dinner at the Archbishop of Canterbury's. And my feelings are well expressed by Penrose in his '*Law Student's Verses*,' which, I suppose, you have seen."

"No, I do not know them."

"I have a copy of them in my pocket-book, given to me last night." And Cumberland read, in his gay, sprightly tones, the following airy and animated *vers de société*:—

WITCHES.

A New Fact in Natural Magic, written after a Ball t Huntingdon.

I.

A witch! the fancy turns me pale,
  Like that white rose on Lady Bagot;
I thought that good Sir Matthew Hale
  Had sent the last witch to the fagot!
And so they flourish still, it seems;
  Oh! pray, great Brougham, prove the error;
And visions shining through my dreams,
  Foretel another reign of terror.
Black tresses, like the dark locks flowing
  O'er poor Sir Walter's handsome Jewess *
And lips like those that look so glowing
  In that sad book, the *Monk of Lewis!*

II.

And eyes so full, and blue, and sunny,
  Are gazing kindly into mine,
Bright as those of Mrs. Honey,
  A simile mind—Madeline.
And whispers in my ears are creeping,
  Coral lips I'm sure between;
Not Spenser in his garden sleeping,
  Heard sweeter from the *Faëry Queene;*

* Rebecca in "Ivanhoe."

And footsteps drop upon the ground,
  Like pleasant noise of summer rain,
Or from a twilight bower, the sound,
  "Good night," and come again.

III.

They walk for ever by my side,
  Fair witches with their sunny glances,
With just the cheeks to bloom in rhyme,
  Or meet by moonlight in romances.
They walk with me where'er I go,
  On summer mornings—summer eves;
I open Chitty's page, and lo!
  A spirit in the leaves!
Oh! wondrous change! Oh! magic power!
  What glory o'er the earth hath broke!
The King's Bench blooms into a bower,
  And beauty rises out of Coke!

IV.

In vain I turn each learned page,
  And ponder Sugden o'er and o'er;
Or muse upon this wicked age,
  Or shut my double outer door!
In vain I flee from them, and shut
  Myself up in some bowery vale;
You might as well attempt to cut
  O'Connell from his Tail!

Oh! lay them with some magic line,
Some spell by Bishop or Clementi;
Alas! a witch at seventy-nine,
Is nothing to a witch at twenty!

"They are worthy of Penrose's lively and graceful muse," said I. "However brilliant he may be in the House of Commons, I cannot help thinking that, in literature, he would be more prominently and powerfully distinguished, than in the coarse turmoil of politics, for which, I fear, he has not the requisite nerve or muscle. But, Cumberland, you have not entirely given up politics? Why do you not attend some of the popular meetings, and keep your name before the public?"

"I am tired of politics, to tell you the truth. I never had any decided creed in them, and I have no fixed principles to guide me in them, because I have not studied them with sufficient attention, and

public life has ceased to afford me the pleasurable excitement which I once found in the stirring business of political agitation. Besides, having made a showy figure before the public, I do not like now to be very prominent before society, until I retrieve my position by energy and the successful exertion of my abilities."

"Well, perhaps you are right. What say you to a dinner together at the Sheridan Club?"

"Not to-day, I am engaged all this week."

"Where, and with whom, Mr. Student-at-Law?"

"Oh! that is no great matter. You shall know another time."

I was proceeding to make some little remark, when in came Gabriel Cleveland, with his smiling face and cheerful laugh.

"Well, lads, who's for a trip to Gravesend

to-morrow. I will drive any one that likes in my new phaeton to the Tower Stairs, and we will go down the river in one of the steamers, have an early dinner at a new hotel there, which I have been solicited to patronise, and we shall be up in town in time to see the *ballet* at the Opera."

"Come, say 'Yes,' Wynville," said Cumberland; "let us all have a day of it."

They persuaded me, half against my will, to join them on the morrow, for a day's pleasure down the river, and we parted. I wrote some letters after they went, and transacted some business about town. I strolled out in the afternoon to Kensington Gardens, being not in much humour for company, and wishing to reflect on my position with Lady Jane.

I found myself walking in one of the most retired parts of the garden, under the shade

of some of the oldest trees. So much engaged was my mind with reflection and contemplation of my case, that I had really scarcely noticed those whom I chanced to meet, since I had entered the Park at Grosvenor Gate. While musing idly and unprofitably, my attention was caught by a lady and gentleman walking some distance before me. The gentleman's figure particularly caught my notice, and his dress of a peculiar shade of blue, and brown trousers, were similar to those I had seen on Cumberland in the morning. On looking again I could scarcely have a doubt but that it was Granby Cumberland. It was his figure, and his gait. But who could be the lady? He had told me that he had entirely changed his habits, and that he had given up looking for *liaisons*, and that he had fixed his mind entirely on his profession. This lady leaning on him

was, however, a suspicious fact that he still retained some of the habits of a lady-killer, once famous in society for his successes. It was quite clear that whoever she was, there was "lady" stamped on her form and her mode of walking, and her simple and quietly elegant dress. While I was wondering who could be the fair one, her dress was caught by a briar in the underwood, and she half turned round to disengage her shawl. A ray of the sun struck fully upon her through the trees, and revealed to me the sweetly ingenuous face of Miss Dormer, the actress!

What could I think? Miss Dormer had always borne the most unblemished reputation. Her name was always quoted, whenever one desired to praise the actresses of England, and give them a kind word. No calumny had ever clouded her even for a passing day, and I could have staked my

life on the fact that she was as "the icicle on Dian's temple." But certainly it was a strange thing that she should be walking in Kensington Gardens with such a man as Granby Cumberland. He was about the very last man in London that I could have supposed that Miss Dormer would have taken for a companion in a scene where she was so likely to be observed as in the gardens adjacent to Hyde Park.

I had seen so much of London life, and of the strange manifestations of human character revealed in it, that I had almost become a disciple of the "nil admirari" philosophy. Still for the rest of that evening the thought of Cumberland and Miss Dormer walking by themselves in Kensington Gardens often presented itself to my mind.

CHAPTER IX.

A TRIP TO GRAVESEND—CONSEQUENCES.

THE next morning was remarkably fine, and at the appointed hour Gabriel Cleveland drove up in his phaeton with Cumberland. I jumped in, and in a few minutes we were whirling along Fleet Street and the Strand, exulting in the prospect of a day's fresh air and exemption from the dust and

noise of London, then teeming with the agitation of political excitement.

The gallant greys of Cleveland bore us in famous style to the Tower wharf, where we saw the "Firefly," with her steam up, just starting for Gravesend. We went on board, and found that the boat was not very crowded.

"What a day we shall have of it!" said Cleveland; "the weather is delightful, the tide running down with us; we shall have a famous appetite for a good dinner; so away with your black political looks, Master Wynville, and let us be three merry fellows this day at least. A fig for all the Whigs and Tories!"

Cumberland and Cleveland were both in high spirits, and I plucked up myself in the contagious influence of their exhilarating mirth, and ceased for a few hours thinking

of Lady Jane. How little did either of us suppose that the very trip of pleasure we were taking that day was to decide the fate of one of us for life!

We darted down the river with great rapidity, and my companions were never in such high spirits. Cleveland had won some monstrous sums of money the week before by speculations on the turf, and had been paid his accounts on the day previous—a fact which I supposed sufficiently accounted for his good spirits; as he was thereby enabled to settle with some of his duns, and obtain additional credit about town. Why Cumberland should be in such a flow of spirits puzzled me somewhat, and often in the course of the day I thought of the sight I had witnessed on the day before in seeing Cumberland and Miss Dormer walking together.

We ordered an early dinner at a house called "The Kentish Greyhound." The table was laid in a queer kind of room, which adjoined a large apartment, with which was a communication by means of a large window over a kind of bar. We were told by the waiter that on ball-nights the room in which we dined was used for refreshments, which were handed into the large room across the bar.

This position of the rooms was the cause of an occurrence which one of our party had grave reasons for recollecting. The window of communication had a blind half drawn across, and a person in our apartment could look into the large room without being observed immediately by one in the outer room.

While waiting for dinner, Gabriel Cleveland went to the window, and stood looking

in attentively for some minutes, when, making a motion for silence with one of his hands, he beckoned to me to approach and look in through the window, pointing inwards with his finger. I looked in and saw refreshing themselves at a table in the long room, three ladies, one of whom held her head down over her plate, and appeared very close sighted. Another of them was placed with her side towards us. And the third was at an angle of the table, her back being rather turned towards us. This last lady appeared to rivet Cleveland's notice particularly.

Cumberland, wishing to see the fun, came across the room and looked in.

"By Jove," he whispered, "what a splendid figure of a woman!"

"Hist, hist!" cried Cleveland; "I should so like to have a glimpse of her face."

"If her face be only equal to her figure," said I, "she must be a lovely woman."

Just then the lady turned round her face to address her friend sitting on her right hand, and we beheld a bright and joyous countenance of a woman about twenty-five years old, with a singularly handsome set of features.

Utterly unconscious that any one was looking at her, or that her observations were overheard, she placed her arms a-kimbo to her sides, and in a soft voice, with a jaunty style, exclaimed—

"Dear me! How I wish that we had some Moselle!"

The exclamation was followed with a laugh from the two ladies, who told her that a glass of sherry in some soda water was quite refreshing enough.

"You shall not be long without Moselle,"

cried Cleveland in a whisper, and motioning to us to be quiet, he left the room for a few minutes.

He soon returned. The ladies were still at their table, chatting quietly, and no one else was in their apartment. Cleveland delighted in quiet humour, and, with a smile on his face, he beckoned us to approach again to the half-blinded window, and observe the result of his joke. The door of the long room opened, and a waiter entered with a tray, on which were a bottle of Moselle and three glasses. He went straight to the ladies' table, and set down the Moselle, asking whether they wished him to pour it out."

"It's not for us," cried one of the ladies.

"No, certainly not for us," said the lady opposite.

"What a provoking mistake!" cried the

beautiful woman, whose form and face had so attracted us. "There has been some mistake made; and now, just as I was wishing for Moselle, it is brought to me as if for the purpose of mortifying me with self-denial."

"The Moselle, ladies, was ordered certainly at the bar; and the message was that it was to be served to the three ladies in the long room."

"Oh! the thing is ridiculous. We never ordered such a thing—we have no notion of paying for what we never ordered."

This last remark was made by the lady whose back was turned to us, and she spoke with a coarse and rude decision of manner, that told of her not belonging to a very high rank in the social scale.

"Well, I will go and find how the mistake has been made," said the waiter, leaving the Moselle behind him.

"It has made me more thirsty than ever for the dear, delicious wine," cried the beauty of the party.

"Oh! fie! Laura, how can you—" was observed by one of her companions, when back came the waiter, who bowed, and protested that there was no mistake whatever—that the Moselle had been ordered for the three ladies in the long room, and had even been paid for, and that nothing more was known about the matter at the bar.

"How extraordinary!" cried lady No. 1.

"How truly ridiculous!" exclaimed lady No. 2.

"How delightful!" cried lady No. 3, the fair Laura, who ordered the waiter to fill her a glass, which she drank to the health of "their absent friends."

The waiter left the room; the ladies laughed and joked amongst themselves, and vowed that it was the most extraordinary

thing they had ever known. Our attention was soon diverted by our dinner being served, and we sat down to it, lowering our voices, not to attract the attention of our fair neighbours, whose voices became a little louder, and whose laughter was much more frequent in the course of the ensuing half-hour, than it had been previously. We continued to eat our dinner, and quaffed some Moselle ourselves, quizzing Cleveland while we drank to "Miss Laura."

After dining, we found that there was little time to be lost in returning to the steamer, and the waiter summoned us in haste. We got up for the purpose of returning to the steamer, and while passing the bar, we found the three ladies making inquiries about the Moselle, and looking very amused at the idea of wine being supplied to them *gratis*, and expressing their

surprise at the matter. Cleveland contrived to edge in a word, and got a good view of Laura's face, which bore inspection, and it was not without a meaning smile on his fair face that Cleveland ascertained that the three ladies were to be fellow travellers with us to town.

Their party was neither brilliant nor distinguished in look. Two of the three were matronly, and mediocre in appearance, very fat, not very fair, and certainly forty. "Laura," however, made amends for the defects of her companions. She had a bright and blooming face, eyes of uncommon fire and sweetness, and a soft smile; her skin was very fair, and her figure perfect.

What she might be, puzzled my companions and myself. The elder ladies looked like the comfortable wives of greasy citi-

zens, and seemed as if they were the better halves of some rich shopkeepers, or brokers. Laura did not in the least resemble them. Her features had no family resemblance to the faces of her companions; her dress and whole appearance were in a different style altogether.

"Before we get to London Bridge," said Cleveland, "I'll find out everything about 'Laura.' I'll bet a supper for the three of us, that I am on visiting terms with her before a fortnight."

"Done!" cried I.

"Done!" said he; "and now for it."

Not many minutes had passed, before Cleveland separated himself from Cumberland and myself, and walked up and down the deck by himself; while standing near Laura's party, the shawl of one of the elder ladies that hung loosely upon her,

was whirled about by a sudden breeze, and would have been floating in the Thames, but for the dexterity of Cleveland in catching it adroitly, and replacing it safely in the owner's possession. This act of politeness was warmly acknowledged by the ladies, and soon Cleveland was in a close conversation with them, which he never ceased till he arrived at London Bridge.

His phaeton and horses were at the Tower Stairs to meet Cleveland, as he had directed in the morning, and Cumberland and I were certainly much surprised when Cleveland escorted the three ladies to his phaeton, handed them all in, told his servant to go home, and waiving his hand to us, quietly drove off.

Cumberland and I adjourned to my lodgings. We gave up the notion of going to

the *ballet*, as we intended, and Cumberland supped with me.

I observed with some interest how sobered in character Cumberland had become. He talked with steady and balanced sense upon every subject that turned up in conversation, and had quite lost the flighty unsteady vivacity with which in other days he had flitted over the theme of the hour. On that night he even turned into ridicule the idle, thriftless life that Cleveland was leading; and to hear him talk, no one would have ever supposed that Cumberland himself had been a reckless rake for several years. At going away that night he asked me when I should be at home next morning, as he had something particular to say to me, and I said at ten o'clock.

CHAPTER X.

A HAPPY LOVER AND A SAD ONE.

I WAITED for Cumberland next day to call on me according to his promise, but he did not make his appearance, and accordingly I went out. While crossing the Green Park to make a call in Piccadilly, whom should I encounter but my truant visitor, who laughed when I told him that I had been waiting for him.

"Well," cried he, "this place will do just as well. We are almost as secluded here for the purpose of a private talk, as if we were in your drawing-room, and I have something most particular to say."

"I thought you had," cried I, "for your manner of late denoted that something important was pressing upon your mind."

"Wynville," cried he, "I will come to the point at once. I am going to be married."

"Married!" I exclaimed, in utter amazement.

He was the very last man in London I could have supposed would have ventured again to enter into the bonds of matrimony, after the extraordinary incidents connected with his first wife. My manner revealed to him my surprise, and he smiled as he saw how utterly astonished I was at this intelligence.

"You may perhaps be surprised, with some reason, Wynville, at a man who has gone through such a scene as I have done again engaging in a matrimonial project. But this time I trust that good fortune and domestic happiness will attend me. Guess who is to be my choice."

"Really I cannot say; the only woman I have heard you praise heartily since the time to which you refer, is Miss Dormer, the actress."

"You have named the very woman—I am her accepted. We shall be married in a few weeks, and I now invite you to my second wedding. May it be more propitious than my first!"

"May it be so, indeed!" I responded. I suppose that I looked extremely surprised, for Cumberland asked what, after all, was there in the intelligence that should give me so much astonishment?

And in fact I was very much astonished at a woman like Miss Dormer, with her quiet and refined character, venturing to marry a man who was deemed so wild a character as Cumberland, and whose name must have been for years familiar to her as one of the giddiest characters "about town." When I hinted somewhat of my feelings upon this point, Cumberland laughed heartily, and cried—

"By Jove! you may well say so, Wynville; but recollect, my dear fellow, that I am a reformed rake, and there is no character, you know, so popular with the sex as the young man who repents before his spirits and health are exhausted, and whose dissipation finally softens down to an oversupply of spirit—of fire—of vivacity—in

short, of anything rather than what is disagreeable."

"The fair sex have much to answer for," said I, laughing. "And did Miss Dormer hint to you that she liked you all the better for having been such a devil of a scamp?"

"Like me! did Miss Dormer like me the better, forsooth? Why, liking or disliking is entirely out of the question. She loves me; aye! and has loved me a considerable time. Oh! the exquisite creature, what a heart she has!"

And then Cumberland burst forth into one of those rapturous flights of enthusiasm in which lovers indulge. To do him justice, however, his feelings were warmly engaged, and he was certainly enamoured of the graceful actress, whose interesting form and winning manners had produced vast mental pleasure to myself. I was not dis-

pleased to hear from Cumberland what a high opinion Miss Dormer entertained of me.

My feeling, however, was for the time one bordering upon envy of Cumberland's happiness. He stood there the very picture of happiness; and he seemed so wrapped up in his approaching nuptials, and so entirely occupied with his bride, that when I reflected how happy that man must feel who has all of the sympathy and heartfelt affection of a woman, with a lovely person and a fair mind, and how black and gloomy was the cloud that interposed itself over my personal views of domestic happiness, I could not help giving way to desponding thoughts, as I experienced, that if my own love affairs had been in a happier train, that I could better have sympathised with Cumberland in his happiness.

He told me very frankly that he had perceived that Miss Dormer had always a strong leaning towards his society. "In the days of my prosperity," said he, "when I used to rattle into the green-rooms of the theatres where she used to perform, I was never received by any of the actresses with more complimentary attention than by Miss Dormer. At the same time, she never encouraged, in the least degree, any of that *double entendre* style of conversation, in which it is permitted to address so many of the ordinary run of actresses. After my fall in society, as you may remember (for you, Wynville, forced me into the green-room of the Haymarket with you), you can recollect that my want of wealth made no difference in her manner. Since the night I spent at her party in company with you, I have been often with her, and I saw that my society

had attractions for her. I used to be thought a pretty fellow by the women, in the days when I had the reputation of having plenty of money. She probably thought my person was not more displeasing because I had lost my credit at my banker's. Enough be it to say, that she loves me, and that I have made her acknowledge her love for me."

"She must have a fine fortune, Cumberland?"

"Nay! there is not half the money in the world people think. She has nine thousand pounds only, though report gives her nearly double that. But it is ample for two to set up housekeeping in a moderate way, and I shall go to the bar with double pleasure, since she cheers me on to it. I read my law books now every day with something like pleasure,

since I know the happiness of one beloved by me is wrapped up in my success."

"Well, to be candid, I was really struck with your extraordinary diligence, and I congratulate you now with all my heart upon your chances of happiness, for I see you are violently in love with her, and from my heart I wish that you may have every happiness you can desire with Miss Dormer."

"Ah! my friend, I have good reason for feeling grateful to you. In the day of adversity you were my faithful friend—kind, generous, and sympathising. I should have been ruined—utterly ruined, but for you."

And he continued to thank me for various proofs of kindness I had shown to him. I parted from him after some time, after having learned that he had no account of Gabriel Cleveland that day! After sepa-

rating from Cumberland, I paid a visit at Lord Belvale's, whose daughters were excellent gossips. I had scarcely entered their drawing-room, when I was received with the exclamation—

"Oh! Mr. Wynville, I suppose you have heard all about Lady Jane Mowbray?"

My heart beat as I heard the name of her whom I idolised thus called out suddenly. With some confusion of manner I stammered out my ignorance of any particular information about the news.

"Why, she is to be married to Lord Lingard at once. She is marrying him for money. Aye! money. Your heroine is not of so superior a mould as you would have led us all to believe some time since."

"Oh! Lady Charlotte, there are so many false reports now in circulation about mar-

riages, that we must not credit every idle rumour that we hear."

"This is no idle rumour, Mr. Wynville; Lord Belvale has the fact from Lord Lingard himself. What can you say to that?"

"Of course it would be idle to contradict it, when there is such strong evidence against me, but I must own that I think it absolutely impossible that Lady Jane Mowbray could marry a man for money merely."

"Oh! then you think," cried Lady Fanny, with a sneer on her aristocratic face, "that it is from love that Lady Jane weds with Lord Lingard!"

The sneer was followed by a laugh that made me very angry. But I concealed my vexation as well as I could, and did not stay long in talking with the Ladies Charlotte and Fanny Tonchet.

"So then," cried I to myself, "it is now all over with my hopes. There is now no chance of my love proving successful. Lady Jane is snatched from me by another, and the only woman I ever saw whom I cared for, is given by fate to the arms of another. And I should have been so happy with her. I would have studied to please her, and make her as happy as it was in my power, and besides, Lady Jane herself had an affection for me. If I could but meet her again!"

As chance would have it, I suddenly stumbled upon St. Leger, whose knowledge of all that was going on in London society was proverbial amongst the very widespread and extensive circle of his acquaintances.

"It is quite true that Lady Jane Mowbray is to be married to Lord Lingard.

The marriage will take place very shortly. The draft of papers and conveyances relative to the marriage settlements were before Brodie yesterday: I know the fact from one of his pupils. I saw Lord Mowbray coming out of Lord Lingard's awhile ago, and he seemed in very high spirits."

"And is Lady Jane in town?"

"She was in town yesterday, but she is gone up to Richmond to-day."

"To Richmond! and to whom there?"

"There is a lady living there, a near kinswoman of the Mowbray family, and sometimes Lady Jane visits there."

"Who is the lady?"

"I believe that she is a half-sister of Lord Mowbray."

"What could have taken Lady Jane there?"

"Oh! there has been a good deal of

intimacy between them, and I have heard some people say that old Lady Ludlow will leave her fortune, which is considerable, to Lady Jane. But I must part with you. I have an engagement at Lincoln's Inn—so *au revoir*."

When St. Leger left me, I lost no time in again repairing to the hotel in Jermyn Street, which Lord Mowbray and his family used to occupy when in town. I had already been there twice and left cards, but I had not had a note either from the wary old Lord, or Lady Jane. When I called on the third time after leaving St. Leger, the waiter informed me that Lord Mowbray was still in town, but that Lady Jane was gone to the country—he believed to Mowbray's Court. I was going away, fancying that she had returned to her home, when Lord Mowbray's valet passed in,

and told me, on asking, that Lady Jane had gone the evening before to Lady Ludlow's, at Richmond, on a visit for a few days.

CHAPTER XI.

AUNT LUDLOW.

When a man is passionately in love, he acts with a precipitation for which his mind is unable to assign any reason. I ordered my groom, and drove off to Richmond, to the Star and Garter, without forming to myself any definite intention, beyond the vague idea of being in company with Lady

Jane, and endeavouring to talk with her. It was past seven o'clock on arriving at the Star and Garter, and before I sat down to dinner I asked where Lady Ludlow's was. I was told that she rented one of the large houses on the terrace, and mechanically I set forward to the house. I wished to see the mansion in which was lodged her whose person occupied my thoughts so much. And though I had no intention of calling on Lady Jane there at such an hour, I was still bent upon seeing where she sojourned. I had no difficulty in making out the house of Lady Ludlow, which was a large old mansion on that terrace, which commands the prospect over the best landscape of the flat sublime in England. There were double sashes to the sitting-rooms, as if some inmate of the mansion were a valetudinarian. After walking up and down before it

two or three times, I returned to the hotel, and sat down to my fried eels and cutlets with a face so awfully grave that even the waiter looked at me with an expression of surprise.

In truth I was in a very grave mood. The only chance of my being united to Lady Jane, was that of my persuading her to elope with me, and break away in desperation from the nuptials which awaited her; but such a chance was entirely out of the question, for Lady Jane would, I was assured, consent to her own sacrifice for the preservation of the social position of her family. I felt quite desperate as I thought of her being the bride of such a man as Lord Lingard—coarse, sensual, and undistinguished for any good qualities beyond a strong common sense, and some knowledge of human nature.

After dining, I ordered my servant to return to town, and fetch me some changes of apparel, as I resolved to take chance for another confidential interview with Lady Jane, and I determined to sojourn at Richmond while she staid at Lady Ludlow's.

I strolled out after dinner, and anxiously turned my eyes in the direction of the house where Lady Jane was staying. There was light in the drawing-room, and also in a bed-room on the second story; and I could not help fancying where was Lady Jane, and in what room was she then, and what also was she thinking of? A servant came to the windows and closed the shutters, and I walked up and down the terrace before the house of Lady Ludlow, in any but a happy state of mind.

I had often read in the books of moralists and essayists of all kinds, of that evil, that

perpetual disappointment, which in this world is the doom of all mortals; but I had always turned aside from those barren generalities, and treated them as the stereotyped declamation of sentence-making sophists. I had exulted in the possession of youth, of health, and vivacity of spirit; and before I had been disappointed in the hope of gaining Lady Jane Mowbray, the whole world had appeared to my eyes in bright and joyous colours. But now I began to experience the practical truth of the philosophy which I had so often read without believing in.

That night I lay awake, and formed many a feverish project about Lady Jane. Now, I would compel her by my entreaties to go off with me, and leave her family to its fate. Or again, I would go to Lord Lingard, and have an interview with him. A thousand wild projects chased each other

through my heated brain. I rose, unrefreshed, to a late breakfast, after which I walked into Richmond Park, to compose my mind, and try to arrive at some definite plan of action.

A turn of the winding road brought a carriage into sight, which was proceeding at a walking pace. The coachman appeared to be waiting for his company, as on walking past, I saw that the carriage was empty. A short way in front I could perceive through the trees two figures. I was so wrapt in thought that I was nearly indifferent at the moment to external objects, but in an instant I was electrified by finding that I was close by the side of Lady Jane.

She started as she saw me. By her side was an aged lady. Recovering her surprise, she was, I believe, the first to speak.

"Mr. Wynville, this is an unexpected meeting."

"Indeed it is; I did not so soon expect to have the pleasure of meeting Lady Jane Mowbray."

"Aunt Ludlow, allow me to introduce Mr. Wynville of Wycombe, son of Mr. Wynville of Wynville Manor."

"What!" cried the old lady, "the son of my old friend and schoolfellow, Emily Parker. Dear me! how time does fly! Ah! Mr. Wynville, I knew your mother well long before marriage was in her thoughts. And you are very like her about the eyes, but you have the Wynville nose decidedly—ah! yes! quite the Wynville nose. Ha! I recollect your great uncle, old Judge Wynville, being on a visit once at my grandfather's in Devonshire. Well, they tell me that you are a great speaker in Parliament, and likely to

be a cabinet minister one of these days. Well! how you do bring old times before me again!"

"My aunt, Mr. Wynville, is fond of seeing faces that recal other days to her."

"My dear," said the old lady, tapping her niece on the shoulder, "when you are as old as I am, you will be equally fond of talking about the days of your youth. Who knows but this time forty years hence you may be saying to some young kinswoman, that when you were young you were acquainted with Mr. Wynville, the great parliamentary orator?"

"Oh! aunt, I am obliged to you for assigning me so long a lease of life."

"Pooh! child, the Mowbrays have all been a long-lived race, and there is no more doubt, under God's providence, that you will be an old woman, than that you will not

be an old maid; and the *Morning Post* has given all the world to-day very clear evidence that there is no likelihood of the latter sad condition becoming yours."

Lady Jane's face flushed while her aunt spoke these latter words—and then it became very pale. She did not look towards me, but averted her head. Lady Ludlow took no notice of us, but continued—

"You are a public man, Mr. Wynville, and therefore probably know the way things are managed: now there is one thing I never could understand—how the fashionable journals contrive to obtain such early intelligence about the marriages that are about to take place. Now, for example, there is my niece's approaching marriage—"

My heart palpitated as Lady Ludlow, quite unconscious of the pain that she was giving to Lady Jane or myself, proceeded.

"There, I say, is my niece's approaching marriage—all about it is set forth in to-day's *Morning Post.* The paper, indeed, does not specify the actual amount of the settlement that Lord Lingard —"

Again an electric flash of pain shot through me as I heard my too successful rival's hated name—

"That Lord Lingard is going to settle upon her. But they have got hold of the fact of the marriage; and it is certainly very extraordinary, when we know how secret the whole matter has been kept. Why, it was only two days ago that I heard of it myself. Now, is it not very singular?"

I answered so little to the purpose, that Lady Ludlow turned to look at me with surprise, and I had to disguise my feelings with considerable difficulty, stammering forth something about the omniscience of

the press, and the rapidity with which gossip was carried about town by means of the clubs, and the swarms of idlers at them.

"Well," continued Lady Ludlow, "it really is very strange. But, to be sure, when we see that the papers never spare the Royal Family, how can it be expected that the nobility should escape their prying gaze? They will never stop until they confide to the public all that lovers say to each other at their meetings. Who knows but we might have in print one of Lord Lingard's fiery declarations of love and adoration penned to the fair idol of his admiration. Jane, my dear child, you would not much like to see one of your noble lover's speeches to yourself circulated through the press."

"Oh! Aunt Ludlow, how can you—"

"Nay—nay, my child! we old folks must

have our say as well as others, and I can tell you that you must expect to be treated to a great deal of quizzing for the next few weeks of your life. Oh! you will get used to it, and think nothing at all about the jokes of your friends. But really I feel tired already, and have walked enough. I think we shall turn back, and drive home to luncheon. Mr. Wynville, I should be very happy indeed, if you would join my tea-table this evening; I should like to hear from you about your excellent mother, and about your worthy father. Ah! it seems only like yesterday since he and I were at Devonshire House together, when the Prince of Wales was in all his glory. Ah, well, well, we shall never see such times again!"

Nothing loth, I immediately accepted Lady Ludlow's invitation. I caught Lady Jane's eye, and saw that she was suffering

considerable agitation. Only that Lady Ludlow was very old, and, like most valetudinarians, selfishly occupied about her own feelings, and the state of her health, she could not but have observed the discomfiture which her conversation had produced in Lady Jane. Nor, in truth, could my countenance have hid my feelings from a sharp observer. Nothing could have pained me more than the results of my brief interview with Lady Ludlow.

The carriage was soon out of sight, and I was left to myself, with the prospect, however, of again seeing Lady Jane that evening, at her aunt's residence, on the terrace. But what chance could I have of a private conversation with her? We should probably not be left much together, and I should have only the satisfaction of sitting near

her, without the possibility of conversing with her upon the subject nearest to my heart.

I spent the rest of the day in rambling about the park. Its rich and sombre scenery was in unison with the grave tone of my thoughts. These old oaks, that overarched so many generations, what tales could they tell! How many fond hearts had made love to each other under their waving branches, when verdant with foliage; or how many summer days had been passed in joy by gay parties rioting in the tide of youthful spirit, making that old park echo with laughter, startling the deer amongst the fern! And how many wild and rushing tempests had swept through the hoary woods, sullenly moaning as the blast passed by them in the night-time! Yes; those grey old oaks, with their knotty

trunks and gnarled branches, had been spectators of many vicissitudes of society. They were the stubborn witnesses of Old Father Time, and suggested to me not a few pensive, and not entirely unpleasing fancies. The fleeting character of human life, our vain desires and weak struggles against events, were contrasted with the eternal law of nature, that made the winter storm howl, and yet that planted those giant trees to defy the tempest, and survive the whirlwind. And what was this life of mine? Was it all a dream? Could I do nought to make my destiny? Must I submit entirely to the fate which lowered over me?

It was in such dreams, such vague and nebulous speculation, that my mind was occupied while for several hours I strolled about the park. It was in vain that I pondered and pondered; the more I thought on

the subject, the less chance did I see of Lady Jane refusing the hand of Lord Lingard. Her own determined spirit, and her anxiety to save the honour of her house from the social ruin impending over it; the vast sum of money due by Lord Mowbray to Lord Lingard; the utter unlikelihood of Lord Mowbray being able to rescue his property from ruin unless by such means as this hateful union; and the readiness of the daughter to victimise herself, not only for the sake of the parent she revered, but for that of the future race of the Mowbrays, whom her gorgeous imagination pictured to her fancy as dwelling, for centuries to come, in that grey, old court, where generations of their name and blood had grown up and died—all these considerations were present to my mind, and convinced me that the marriage was certain to take place, and

that I was sure to behold her whose mind and form had taken such possession of my heart, handed over by the harsh dictates of fortune to another; while I, loving her and beloved (for on the latter point I could not be mistaken), was left to disappointment and vain regrets.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEA-PARTY—FAMOUS BEAUTIES.

On entering Lady Ludlow's drawing-room in the evening, I found that Lady Ludlow was not there. The tea equipage was set forth upon a table. On walking up to the windows that opened on the terrace, commanding a view of the setting sun, whose rays were glittering on the broad and shining reaches of the Thames, as it

was visible at certain portions of its sinuous course, I perceived that an apartment like a boudoir opened on the right hand, and through the door of which there now floated a form, dressed in a charming and simple evening costume—the magnificent form of Lady Jane. Never did I see her look more beautiful, though the face was paler than usual, and the manner was subdued. All that I could imagine of brilliant and alluring womanhood—the softer qualities blended with the more dazzling—appeared united in Lady Jane, as, with a pensive smile, she saluted me.

"My aunt will be here in a few minutes. She is seeing the wounds of her favourite poodle attended to—the dog has been torn by a pet monkey."

"I am happy at the accident," said I, "as it gives me an opportunity of saying a few words to you alone."

"The words must be few and cautious,"

said Lady Jane, holding down her head, "and they must not be a continuation of certain former conversations of yours, which must now be considered as ended for ever."

"*For ever!*" said I, mournfully.

"On that subject, for ever—certainly for ever," she replied; "but I am sure that I shall be very glad at all times to have the pleasure of conversing with Mr. Wynville on literature and politics, and all the subjects of the day. We shall, of course, meet often in society."

"And is the marriage certain to take place?"

"Hush! speak low;" and then in a low tone she said, "it is to take place in three weeks."

"Good Heaven—what a prospect!" cried I, shouting out.

And at this very moment in came Lady Ludlow, leaning on the arm of her companion, a faded gentlewoman. The latter

seemed startled at the vivacity of my exclamation. Lady Jane adroitly covered my retreat by saying—

"What a prospect, indeed! There is scarcely such another in England!" affecting at the same time to look out upon the landscape, and smiling with a painful effort, as she gave a different turn to the meaning of my words, "what a prospect!"

"Well—well," cried Lady Ludlow, "how like your father you are, Mr. Wynville; really it takes me back fifty years to look at you, for your face and features put me in mind of old times. There are two ladies that I have invited specially to come and meet you, for the purpose of looking at you."

"Indeed!" cried I.

"Yes! But unfortunately they are not young ladies; they are only Lady Bab Saunderson and the Dowager Lady Oldcourt. Ah! they remember your father well, when

we were all younger—in the days when we used to be supping at Mrs. Crewe's. Lady Bab Saunderson was very gay, you know, in those days—not so gay indeed as malicious folk said—and Lady Oldcourt was one of the recognised leaders of the fashion. But here they come;" and we heard the rustling of dresses on the stairs.

I had often heard my father and mother at Wynville Manor, when speaking of old times, allude to these identical ladies as being two of the most reckless and foolishly dissipated women of fashion of their days, when the Prince of Wales was at the head of the gay world of pleasure. Lady Bab Saunderson was, if report spoke truly, somewhat more free in her ideas of propriety than was right; but she was a duke's daughter, and an archbishop's niece. She had high and powerful friends, and managed to escape ever being caught *in flagrante delicto.* She had been in the canvassing and

electioneering style of the Duchesses of Devonshire and Gordon, drove a curricle to the admiration of all the men, and invented styles of dress for the envy of all the women. If not a beauty, she was a *belle*—and conversed with vivacity and grace. Lady Oldcourt had been the best horsewoman in England, and I often heard my mother describe her riding in a blue habit, with a hat and feathers, surrounded by all the young men of fashion of the day. She had been always described to me as one of those round smooth Saxon faces one sees only in England, whose regularity of feature and freshness of skin are its chief attractions.

I heard heavy breathing as the ladies were announced, and the stump of something like a wooden leg upon the floor, and I turned round to look at the ladies coming in, and oh! Father Time, how cruel is thy all-devouring tooth. The Beauty and the Belle! Oh! what a pair! It was like a

caricature of the sublime and beautiful by Cruikshank.

First came the beauty, Lady Oldcourt, with a terrible asthmatic panting after walking up two flights of stairs, like an orator after his maiden speech, or a tuft hunter trying to overtake a marquis, striding down Pall Mall like a velocipede. The Beauty! Her great fat pursy cheeks hung flabbily around her soft, thick, pincushion nose, and her eyes that had lost all expression of joy, or wit, or good humour, now jerked heavily in their sockets, lacking the lustre which once shone there. Her fine hair that I had so often heard descanted upon, was replaced by a front and cap bordered with lace, and her broad, lumpish figure was supported on a gold-headed cane. She never was famed for her wit, but was thought by some to have been very attractive, because she had good humour and high spirits; but the first had been changed into the testiness

of a dyspeptic and disappointed old woman, fretting over a small jointure, and the last had oozed away altogether.

Such was the Beauty! After Lady Oldcourt, the *Belle*, Lady Bab Saunderson, came in.

What a figure! She had never been very full in her person, she was now nearly as thin as a ramrod. Her complexion had in youth been of a yellow tinge; it was now tawny and coarse, like a bleached piece of buff leather. Her false teeth protruded from her thin and meagre lips; her eyes had not indeed lost their lustre, they still glittered, but it was with a lurid, ghastly glare, as they flickered in their bloodshot sockets, shining over her sunk and meagre cheeks, of which the flesh seemed to have decayed from the bones, while the skin was stretched across the once fleshy but now denuded muscles of her countenance. A profusion of false hair was so arranged as to conceal

the furrowed forehead of the dame, and her eyebrows were evidently false and angular. She had not put any rouge on her face, because, in her meagre and attenuated state, a false bloom would only have been making a vigorous contrast, which with the *savoir faire* of a practised artist, she thought it better to avoid than to provoke. Her dress hung in loose and waving folds about her emaciated limbs; and when she laughed, you trembled lest her features would be rent asunder, experiencing, as you saw forced humour flitting across her slender, tapering face, much the same feeling as if you saw a flash of forked lightning darting around the ambitious wooden spire of a village church. But indeed, to do Lady Bab Saunderson justice, she very rarely indulged in the dangerous electricity of laughter. Possibly she might have dreaded the clattering together of her old bones, if she had given way to a burst of hearty merriment.

She affected the stiff and saturnine, and made a desperate attempt, in spite of her naturally garrulous propensity, to achieve the dull and dreary consequence of a dignified old age.

Yet there were the eyes that flashed love into the coarse heart of an amorous royal duke. There were the lips which, if rumour spoke with truth, had been pressed by a royal personage, when his blood was not frozen by the frost of seventy winters. That voice, so broken and cracked, was that whose tones were so dear to gay and select companies. The contrast between the trio of old women, Lady Bab Saunderson, Lady Oldcourt, and Lady Ludlow, with the young and beautiful being, the object of my affections, was not a little strange, and suggested many thoughts to me.

Lady Bab Saunderson turned towards me with some curiosity when my name was mentioned to her.

"A son of Mr. Wynville, of Wynville Manor! I am sure your father ought to have been made a peer by this time. I thought that your mother would have long since been titled."

Lady Bab, I learned afterwards, took great pleasure in dwelling upon family failings, and personal disappointments of all kinds. She knew that my father was sulky with his old friends, the Whigs; because, at the time of Mr. Canning's administration, they did not get him made a peer; and while tea lasted we heard of nothing but the advantages of a title, mingled with some congratulations to Lady Jane on the certainty of her being a peeress, and a wealthy one.

It was strange enough that Lady Bab Saunderson had been very glad, though a duke's daughter, to marry a Shropshire commoner, not very rich in wisdom. But she knew well what induced her at five-and-thirty years of age to accept a country

gentleman of new family and moderate estate. Her failing to become a peeress herself only made her take pleasure in dwelling on the like failure of others in securing a title.

Lady Jane sat opposite to me at table, and I regarded her with fixed attention. With an effort, quite visible to me, who knew her secrets, though concealed from the rest of the company, she seemed interested in the very prosy conversation of the tea-table, and was particularly attentive to seeing that the old lady visitors of the evening got their tea as they pleased—that Lady Oldcourt's was not too strong, as she had got nerves; and that Lady Bab Saunderson's was strong as Usquebaugh, as Lady Bab, with a ferocious contortion that looked like the dismal caricature of a smile, was pleased to say with horrible facetiousness, "that she had been born before nerves were invented." Lady Jane also listened with

affected interest to the prodigious quantity of twaddle that came from the old ladies, and no one could have ever supposed that Lady Jane and I had been once so interested about each other.

After tea, Lady Ludlow's companion was pressed into the service, and with her aid the old ladies made up a party at whist. Lady Jane rolled a chess-table forward, and beckoned that we should have a game of chess. Before I had accepted the proposal, Lady Ludlow interrupted—

"Would not Mr. Wynville like to look over my portfolio of engravings and caricatures? He will see his father's likeness pretty often amongst them, along with all the celebrities of the days of the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Melbourne, and Lady Duncannon."

Lady Jane seemed to hesitate, but I eagerly protested my great curiosity to see the prints, as I heard Lady Ludlow say to her companion—

"Go, Tindal, and set out the print-table in the study, and light the two small lamps with reflectors, and put them there; the folios are so cumbrous that they cannot be easily moved into the drawing-rooms."

The drawing-rooms opened *en suite*—at one side there was the small boudoir, and out of the boudoir was a door into a room fitted up as a study, with books of amusements and prints. In a few minutes Tindal had the lamps upon the table, and a large folio of curious portraits and old caricatures spread out before us. Lady Jane and I found ourselves together, and so remote from the back drawing-room in which the whist party were assembled, that it was quite possible that we could occasionally get in a few words of conversation about other matters than prints.

I took up a print of the Duchess of Devonshire.

"I should like to know, was the Duchess

of Devonshire happy in all her splendour, when she was surrounded by the homage and admiration of the gifted and the brilliant?"

"No!" cried Lady Jane, in answer to the remarks I had made, "the Duchess of Devonshire had fixed her attachment too much on persons ever to be happy. It was with Mr. Fox and the Prince of Wales, and not with the ideas of Whiggery and of political enthusiasm, that her mind was so intoxicated. Her character was too emotional for happiness; she could extort the admiration of others, but could not command her own feelings, and was unequal to bearing the cross of disappointment, which all must sooner or later take up in this world; if not to-day, at least to-morrow or the next."

Lady Jane spoke these words with a pathetic manner that was not lost on me, and I could almost fancy what was passing through her mind at the time.

"Then you think," said I, "that she would have been much happier if, instead of wedding herself to power, wealth, and worldly grandeur, she had made a marriage of affection?"

"I cannot say that," said Lady Jane; "because it is very possible that a woman like the duchess would have pined in obscurity; but I look on the duchess's character to have been one entirely influenced by sentiment. She was calculated to fascinate and delight all who saw her, and came within the sphere of her intercourse. Her talents were also undoubted, but still she had not that commanding force of character which triumphs over adverse circumstances, and reconciles its possessor to any lot in life. Her object was to dazzle rather than to rule."

"And would power make a woman happier, if she were united to a person whom she could not love?" I spoke this in a low tone.

"The power of doing good on a great scale would. The power of drawing forth talents from the obscurity to which a miserable poverty consigned them; the power of rewarding humble virtue, and smoothing the pillow of sorrow; of casting gleams of joy into the houses of wretchedness; of helping the forsaken: that power of being widely and practically useful would console a woman for many disappointments."

"Instead of being passionately loved by one, she might feel her happiness in being gratefully regarded by many. Is that the feeling you wish to express?"

"Something deeper than that. The voice of an approving conscience would cheer her, even though many of her dearest affections might be blighted."

"Ah! Lady Jane, could it by any means be made a matter of conscience to marry where we placed our affections?"

She remained silent a few moments, and then said in a very low tone—

"This is no place to moot such questions, and this is not the time either, when I am about to perform an act which will of itself give a practical answer to the question you have put just now; but remember [and she held up her finger], we are not again to enter upon forbidden topics of conversation. Quite enough has been said by both of us to understand each other's characters, and therefore it is quite useless to discuss questions which have been irrevocably decided."

"Yes! but, Lady Jane, only hear me for a moment?"

"Nay! I will not."

"I wish merely to ask whether there is a possibility of my seeing you by yourself, before your ——?" and I could not bring myself to allude to her marriage.

"I shall stay here only a couple of days longer, and then I shall proceed to Mowbray's Court. I do not think that I shall return to

London, unless, perhaps, I might go up to it for a day or two. But you know that you and I must henceforward be very reserved with each other, and nothing can be more unjust, I think, than under the circumstances of my position for you to embarrass me with these conversations which distress me so much."

"Ah! excuse me—if you knew but how I feel; if you could only feel the interest that you have raised in my heart, you might ——"

"I positively protest against this discussion. Let us return to the whist players."

"Once for all—is your determination finally taken?"

"It is irrevocable—my family must be saved, and its honours preserved. There is no other way but for me to adopt the course before me; and I am resolved to accept my lot, and no one shall ever hear me murmur."

She spoke with calmness; and yet I could

distinguish a certain plaintive manner, indicating suppressed emotion. I never saw her splendid figure and striking face appearing to more advantage than on that night, and I could not help feeling what a magnificent prize was escaping from my possession. Yet her will was so calmly and firmly expressed that I could not doubt of the resolute spirit with which she accepted her destiny.

"When I shall be Lady Lingard [she faltered ever so slightly in pronouncing the words], I trust that we may often see each other in society. I intend to take a great interest in politics and in literature, and I promise myself much pleasure from bringing forward talents out of the obscurity in which poverty often shrouds them. You will be able to tell me of all that is interesting in the doings of the House of Commons."

I could not answer. Was her calmness assumed? Was it the affectation of being

resigned to her condition? She left me little time for reflection, and broke in upon my silence with a sweet smile on her beautiful and expressive face—

"Come, do not be so downcast. We are not the only persons severed by the iron hand of necessity; life is every day full of such trials as that upon which you look so grave. This world is no scene where unmixed happiness is to be looked for. Recollect what my favourite Jeremy Taylor says, 'We are in this world like players at tables. To choose the card dealt to us is impossible, but to play it is in our power.' We must only do as well as we can, and be content to look for our final happiness in another life, where disappointment shall not be known. But come, we have turned over these pictures enough." And with great haste, as if her feelings were overmastering her, and which she could not entirely suppress, she suddenly took up one lamp, and extinguished

the other, and preceded me to the whist-table.

The old ladies retired early; Lady Ludlow yawned, and I was obliged to take my departure after Lady Bab Saunderson and Lady Oldcourt, saying, however, that I should call on the next day.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DEATH-BED REQUEST—HINTS TO A YOUNG WHIG.

On the next morning after I had spent the evening with Lady Ludlow, I received a letter, dated Wynville Manor, from my mother, informing me that my father was very seriously ill, and in a most precarious condition, and expressing his desire that I should repair home. The letter was written in such urgent terms, that I

lost no time in complying with my mother's wishes. I started immediately for Wynville Manor, but I did not leave my hotel without sending a few hasty lines to Lady Jane, informing her of the painful necessity I was under of taking my immediate departure for Wynville Manor.

When I arrived at home, I found that a leading London physician was closeted with my father, whose constitution had for some time been showing very serious symptoms of breaking up. My mother was very anxious, and was greatly alarmed, and boded the worst; but on my arrival she cheered up very much, and my presence was a great comfort to her. My elder brother, Frederick, had never been a very affectionate son, and his character was so dull and void of animation, and he had so few sympathies, that his presence was no consolation to my mother during the decline of my father's life. My sister

Louisa was at that time on the Continent, travelling with her husband, and my brother Charles was in India with his regiment.

My mother's face flushed with pleasure as she saw me.

"The doctor gives some hope," said she; "he thinks your dear father's life, with care, may be prolonged for some years."

"He has never wanted for affectionate care, my mother, while he has had you by his side."

"He recommends us to winter at Torquay, in Devonshire, and I have written to desire that a house should be engaged for us. Your father hates being away from home, and I know that he will feel lonely and discontented at Torquay. Now I beg that you will try and give us as much of your society there as is possible; for certainly we shall be very much in want of the aid of our friends to cheer up your

father's drooping spirits. My dear son, will you not promise me what I ask?"

"You need never press me, mother, where my duty is concerned. I shall feel it a privilege to be of any assistance to you, more especially when Louisa is away."

"That's my dear boy; now your father will presently be asking for me, so I must leave you."

The physician did not by any means despair of his case, and thought that life might be protracted for some years, by using care and extreme temperance. My father had received from nature an iron constitution, though the life of pleasure of his early years had considerably injured it, along with political excitement; for at one period he had been a very keen and zealous partisan, and had distinguished himself by the asperity with which he treated the court politicians of George the Fourth, between whom and my father there had always been feelings of

more or less hostility, owing to causes I need not now dwell upon.

After some time, I was admitted to my father's room. He was extremely glad to see me, and pressed my hand with significant emotion. I was startled to see the change in his appearance, for he was greatly emaciated.

"'The last scene of all that ends this strange, eventful history,' is drawing near, my dear Arthur; it can't last much longer."

"Nay, Sir, you must not be downcast."

"I am not easily made downcast, my boy; I belong to the old school, and hope that I shall meet the appointments of Providence with calm acquiescence in its decisions. I have had a very agreeable and pleasant life, and have had one piece of good fortune, which is the greatest that man can have. Your mother, your admirable mother [and the old gentleman's eyes grew moist, and his voice faltered], has been to

me an incomparable wife. She has had her temper tried, in ways that this is no place or time to talk of, but her conduct has produced an extraordinary impression on me, in one respect; it has made me a Christian in my opinions. I know that you have been a great reader of philosophy, and that you have examined into the foundation of opinions upon religion and politics more than most young men of this 'light-literature-reading age,' as you once called it in my hearing; and I do not want to hear any lecturing upon religion—much less argument about such matters; but, Arthur, I wish to tell you something about this change of mind in me, which you might care to know."

"My dear father, I am all attention to you, and will listen to what falls from you with the greatest interest."

"Whatever the tongue of malice may have said to the contrary, my religious opi-

nions were never of so infidel a character as was asserted by some of my defamers. My religion through life has been that of a Whig of the age of the French Revolution. Open infidelity I never encouraged, because my common sense told me, that without faith in a religious state, society could be kept together only by force. And I had a rose-water horror of ragged infidelity, though I was very tolerant towards it under the robes of a peer. I was at heart a Deist, believing in future retribution; and the Deism of Pope the poet was nearly my creed. But my opinions have undergone a serious change since I have begun to observe and reflect more clearly than a life of dissipation and excitement permitted me.

"To be brief, as I have little strength for talk, whatever makes human nature most beautiful and worthy of moral admiration—whatever gives it strength to bear with sweetness of temper the disappoint-

ments of life, and to be cheerful under trial, and benevolent towards one's fellow-mortals —whatever does all this, must not only be founded in principles of truth, *but be also endowed with elements of supernatural strength.* Mere earthly philosophy cannot have the influential effect I allude to. Living, as I have done all my life, in the great world of ambition, I can with truth say that I have seen many of its proudest would-be philosophers show childish anger and entire want of moral force of character, under severe dispensations from above; and when they have become wedded to evil habits, it is almost impossible to reclaim them. There is no pool of Bethesda for them to regenerate their nature, and restore it to health and energy. They scoff at the Atonement, and suppose that Providence will condescend to a debtor and credit account with them, giving them allowance for their paltry good works and only charging

against them the flagrant departures from obvious morality. They do not believe in the supernatural effect of religion, or in the supernatural origin of Christianity; and they wallow on in the world, adoring (if they can be said to adore) a vast mechanism—a huge, organised, tremendous world of power, in which the great and awful Maker is regarded in no more affecting light than as an Eternal Engineer—the Brindley or Stephenson of the created universe!

"Alas! my son, I am speaking of what I have seen and known to have been the current of thought in most of my Whig companions at Brookes's; and indeed, during a great part of my life, my opinions were little better, or more spiritual, than that dreary and dismal code, some of the outlines of which I have been sketching to you.

"Bear with me for a moment. To what

effect is all that I am saying? It is not with the object of making you my father confessor. No, my dear son; I say all this in order to give you some hints.

"We Whigs have lost the confidence of the country by our irreligious character. Our great prophet of the party in my young days—Charles Fox—was at heart a well-bred Deist, and was certainly no pattern of morality. The excesses of his private life probably did our party more injury than the brilliancy of his superlative talents did us service. Without having the grave and serious faith of the Dissenters, we have been playing with edged tools, and affecting a great zeal for the Dissenting interest, which is far more fanatical in its views of religion than perhaps any sect of Protestant Christendom. Our party has for the last fifty years been always sapped by the irreligious character of its leaders; and if ever Whiggism is to retain a permanent ascendency in

England, it can only be by adopting a new line of policy, and by taking for the leaders of the party, not splendid rakes or dazzling spend-thrifts of fashion, but men of grave character, not alienated from the religious sense of the community. Thus we Whigs have suffered terribly by being mixed up with that Catholic question, which was saddled upon us by Burke and Grattan. But it is pleasant that that question has at last been settled, and that it can do us no further damage.

"Now, Arthur, you will ask, what is the upshot of all I have been saying? It is that you should choose better company than you keep. Granby Cumberland and the Clevelands are not companions for a man like you, aspiring to take a conspicuous part in public affairs. If you mix yourself up with such characters as Cumberland and the Clevelands, you will, as that rascal Cobbett says, 'be tarred with the same brush,' and

you will get a bad name with a most influential body of the people. My dear boy, I don't want you to become a sneaking hypocrite, or a fellow of the Joseph Surface school. I do not want you to take a leaf out of Addington's book, and cant platitudes of morality. Pooh! the very thought of it makes me sick. No, no. But I confess that I have been sorry to find that you have not been diligent of late in your attendance at the House of Commons, and I learned from some quarters that you were not as efficient in debate as, with your talents, you might unquestionably be.

"Now, listen to what an experienced old fellow—your own father—has to say on this grave point.

"Charles Fox and Sheridan have ruined hundreds of brilliant young men of great abilities, who began life with splendid prospects, strong passions, and gave the reins to indulgence. Because Fox and

Sheridan were men of dissipated habits, and were famous as orators, young men of genius fancy that they also can lead the lives of men about town, and pursue the race of public life. But a few years upon the town withers that fine bloom of the imagination which gives such genial warmth to the language of an orator: it exhausts the nervous energy, and palsies the masculine vigour of the will. The constitution is apparently unbroken, but the man's mind has become relaxed—he is like a soldier of Hannibal's at Capua, and is unfitted for the sustained shock of parliamentary warfare. Why, not one man out of a hundred thousand has the extraordinary physical constitution of a Fox or a Sheridan! And that is a fact to which I wish that I could rivet your attention. Ah! my dear boy, if I had only been more careful of my habits in early life, I should have registered a high name in politics; and it makes me

now unhappy to see you showing symptoms of—of—in short, being the same fellow that your father was forty years ago."

I hastened to disabuse my father's mind of the idea which had entered his head of my being a libertine or a rake. I alluded in cursory terms to my acquaintance with Cumberland and the Clevelands, but did not venture to inform him what was the actual reason why I had become of late indifferent as to politics. I did not wish to harass the old gentleman's mind about my love for Lady Jane Mowbray.

He continued to talk to me for some time, much in the same strain. He believed that the first post in the world was to be a great leader in the British House of Commons. He would sooner have been a great political leader, like Fox or Lord Chatham, than King of England or Emperor of Russia, or have the military glory of a Marlborough or Wellington. The grandeur of Napoleon's

mind was visible to him in the French Emperor's capacity for being an orator. "If such a man as Bonaparte," said he once, "had been bred up to English politics, what a prodigy he would have been! He would have shown the House of Commons a mixture of Fox's force and Chatham's fire."

One thing struck me very much in the revelation of character made to me by my father. It was the influence which the admirable character of my mother made upon his mind. My mother was one of the most perfect examples of practical Christianity that ever came under my notice; and the exalted nature of her virtue, purified from all that vain self-righteousness upon which the mere moralists set such value, made the deepest impression on my father when, after retiring from the contests of party politics and the hurry of London society, he gave himself leisure to reflect calmly upon life and its responsibilities.

Let scholastic divines reason as they will, and esoteric Christians spread the web of their casuistry, the observation of the practical effect produced by true religion upon human character does more to make a sound understanding acknowledge the truth of revealed religion than all that could be urged by metaphysical reasoners like Coleridge.

CHAPTER XIV.

A GLORIOUS DEBATE—THE RIVALS.

On finding that my father was in no immediate danger, I returned to London, most anxious again to have an interview with Lady Jane. I found, on reaching London, that she had set out for Mowbray's Court. I learned also that the match between her and Lord Lingard was a standing topic of conversation in society.

Several days had elapsed since I had attended my parliamentary duties, and I found that I was voted by all my party as a confirmed idler, and a lounging politician. Little did people know how much the passion of love had extinguished the passion of ambition! I resolved, however, to go down to the House, and endeavour to affect a zeal and interest about party topics that I was very far from feeling; as in the state of disappointment under which I laboured, I took scarcely any interest in public matters.

When I got down to the House of Commons, I found it crowded, even at an early hour, as a stirring debate was expected. Several humdrum members addressed the House, amidst laughter and grotesque noises, and the assembly was in one of its rudest moods. I sat contemplating the scene, and some of the features of that famous and motley assembly diverted my

mind from the gloomy reflections which the success of Lord Lingard had raised in me.

At about nine o'clock, several members jumped up to catch the Speaker's eye, and the *basso* voice of that courtly functionary and imposing president called Lord John Rowland's name. He was then struggling hard to win the historic fame which he had courted all his life in different shapes. His feeble and shrunken frame—his small, pinched, and withered features—gave no token of that resolute ambition, which was the inspiration of the man, who had much of that Saxon fortitude and strong resolve which are the very source of English greatness. He had dared to challenge public notice to his abilities in several ways, and had sought to gain laurels as a dramatist, a novelist, a writer of poetry, and a historian! In all these departments of intellectual exertion, he had shown talent, but not genius, and exhibited proofs of an acute intellect,

if he gave little promise of a mighty mind. His fancy was too frigid for a poet; his mind was, perhaps, more suited to historical composition, than to any other intellectual achievements; but his ricketty and weak constitution denied him that power of labour, which is absolutely requisite to every votary of the historic muse, unless he combine the highest merits of the thinker and the stylist like the profound and captivating Hume. As a *litterateur*, Lord John had hardly passed beyond receiving the praise of cleverness and ingenuity; but occasionally a felicity of epigrammatic remark, a smartness of sarcasm, and a vigorous view of affairs clearly gave evidence of depth of thought and intellectual activity. He might also have attained to far higher distinction as an author, if he had concentrated his talents and pursued some one distinct walk, instead of aspiring to the various parts of historian, dramatist, essayist, statesman, and orator.

With his extensive circle of general knowledge, his lofty pretensions, his varied activity, and the great extent of his attainments, he reminded one who saw his small form and recollected his objects, of an abridgment of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in breeches.

Yet that various knowledge which he possessed in cultivating literature, furnished Lord John Rowland with a fecundity of illustration that proved, in after years, of inestimable service in parliamentary debate. Stammering forth his sentences with a weak, broken voice, and a cold, sluggish manner, he at first astonished the listener by the feebleness of his powers. On the night of which I now speak, I could hardly help thinking how a man with such little power as a speaker could face so sturdy an audience as a British House of Commons. To be sure, the House recollected his name, his ancestry, and his powerful connection,

and therefore lent him a willing ear, but I wondered that so proud a spirit as Lord John Rowland should condescend to be tolerated by any assembly upon earth.

On that night my opinion of Lord John underwent a great change.

He replied to a speaker who, in appearance and manner, was the very contrast to himself—the member who preceded him, a bluff and fine-looking man, with a liquid voice and an oily manner, a most artful and practised speaker, standing, as he did, in the front rank of the most successful advocates at the bar. He was somewhat damaged in reputation, his political career had been inconsistent, and he was obnoxious to attack from his opponents. At first, Lord John stammered and hesitated in his usual manner, and his mincing elocution and priggish deportment contrasted very unfavourably with the sleek and slim lawyer, whose agreeable manner and melodious enuncia-

tion had been so pleasing. But soon Lord John electrified the House by three or four pithy sentences, sharp, terse, and barbed with sarcasm, cutting deep into the demerits of the political character of the last speaker; and then, while the House was alive to the language and felicity of the points made by Lord John, with more sustained declamation than I could possibly have expected from him, he launched forth into a current of ardent and eager expostulation with the opposition, boldly poured forth the views which he took of public affairs, appealed to historical evidence to confute the views put forward by the last speaker, and denounced, in bold and scathing language, that system of politics which would change the aristocracy of England into an oligarchy, and its constitutional monarch into a despot. So apt and striking were some of his illustrations, so ready were his references to history, and so vigorously did he

treat the whole subject under debate, that the House was carried away, and burst into transports of cheers.

Up stood Penrose to reply. I had not seen him for some time, and his wasted appearance told too truly of what I had heard, that Penrose was in a decline. His voice was husky and feeble, and wholly unsuited as a vehicle for the glittering wit which flashed forth in a sparkling speech, that was more brilliant and intellectual than Lord John Rowland's, but which was not animated with moral purpose, or political passion, and which therefore failed upon an excited audience; though, from first to last, it was a brilliant piece of cleverness and point, and sparkled all over with elegance and wit. I could see that poor Penrose was deeply mortified at his speech not being more successful. After Penrose, up rose his old rival Barrington Mackenzie, who lusty with vigorous health, and fired by the prodigious

success of his brilliant essays in literature, which almost vied in popularity with the Waverley Novels, was then eager to signalise himself in the ranks of political party. He at that time was probably uncertain whether he should pursue the life of a man of action, or aim at the very highest honours that the republic of letters has to confer. His strong body contrasted with the wasting frame of his old Cambridge antagonist, and his full-toned voice (though wanting modulation) filled the ears after the weak pipe of poor Penrose's reedy organ. There was dead silence while, with unbroken fluency, he poured forth a torrent of eloquent language, that could not be called declamation, for there was argument and matter in it of the most valuable kind; nor could it be called debating, for it was not even professedly a reply to previous speakers; it was more like a brilliant academic essay on the ethics and historic analogy of politics,

than the practical advice of a statesman urging the senate to adopt a particular policy, upon which the speaker had staked his power. Mackenzie surveyed politics as La Place did the heavens—partly with admiration at the wonderful prospects opened by science to the understanding, and partly with a view to verify and sometimes to correct the sublime views of former illustrious expounders of the universe. What La Place was to Newton, in astronomy, Barrington Mackenzie was, in politics, to Burke. But he succeeded where Burke had very often failed. Mackenzie succeeded in *lecturing* the British House of Commons; he accomplished what numbers of clever essayists had failed to do; he made disquisition delightful for the time he was speaking to that fastidious and impatient audience, which distrusts subtlety, and dislikes all display of intellectual gladiatorship not practically connected with the debate. Like

Schlegel lecturing on the intricate system and manifold beauty of Shakspeare, so Mackenzie expounded with exquisite clearness and singular brilliancy many of the conflicting principles which make up the British Constitution.

While the cheers were dying away which greeted the close of Mackenzie's splendid and eloquent dissertation, there advanced to the table a member, with wan face and saturnine countenance, repulsive and intellectual in appearance—John Wrixon Crowley—the most celebrated of the political *litterateurs* of the opposition, and notoriously connected with the journal which carried on the controversy of current politics with the organ in which Mackenzie was then delighting the reading public with his brilliant essays. Crowley was in appearance the very impersonation of a reviewer, with a dreadfully critical face, in which a sharpness of character was curiously

mingled with a thoughtful expression. Nor did his manner as a speaker belie the appearance of the outward man. His speech was delivered *ex cathedra*, after the fashion of a political pedagogue; and though he showed so much self-conceit and asperity to his opponents, as to repel the sympathies of a popular audience, still he exercised the influence of unquestionable ability, and extorted attention from an assembly in which such a man could never be popular. He brought to bear upon the subject of debate a prodigious quantity of small facts, and strung them all together with the adroitness of a practised controversialist. To the brilliant and showy generalisations of Mackenzie, he opposed some artful references to the French Revolution, and upon that alarm-bell of Toryism rung the changes with all the zeal and energy of a conservative alarmist. The *argumentum ad terrorem* he applied with great skill, and feeling him-

self a most sincere horror of political change, and quaking for the consequences to that system of which he was the defender, with unaffected earnestness he besought the House not to yield to pressure from without. He disparaged the members of the ultra-popular party with scorching severity of recriminating vituperation, lacerating them all with as hearty a good will as if he had the whole pack of Whig authors unkennelled before him. That he displayed great ability in this speech was undeniable, and his side of the House gave him hearty applause; while the more intelligent and candid of his opponents could not refuse the tribute of admiration to his talents.

He had scarcely resumed his seat, and while several members were, in that height of excitement, trying in vain to catch the Speaker's eye, the cries of "Percy! Percy!" drowned all the discordant noises of the assembly; and the manly figure of Percy

advanced to the ministerial side of the table. Of all those who had spoken, none had more advantages of personal appearance; his large head gave evidence of a massive brain, and on his bold, resolute countenance was stamped an expression of unmistakeable vigour. The House was eager to hear him, for he had repeatedly given proof of his ability, but some of his political friends feared that he had undertaken too much in attempting to reply to Wrixon Crowley, who had the advantage of being trained for upwards of twenty years to parliamentary life, besides being a practised writer on political subjects. But though his friends might have been nervous about the result, he was himself as cool and collected, as if, instead of determining to prostrate Wrixon Crowley, and utterly crush him in debate, he were only going to take aim at a stag in the park at Rowsley Hall. What a careless air there was in his attitude! He seemed

negligent even to excess; yet after the three studied speeches of Penrose, Barrington Mackenzie, and Wrixon Crowley (for each of their several addresses had been elaborated carefully after a different style), the carelessness of Percy in his style and delivery was that "negligentia non ingrata" which Cicero recommended by precept if not by example. There at the table stood Percy, in his own person and in his character and habits the very type of English aristocracy—a man of ingrained *hauteur*, the proud descendant of one of the proudest families—the heir to one of our oldest and most historic titles—there was young Percy, whose ancestor's head had fallen on the scaffold under the domination of the Roundhead party! Aye, there was Percy making a spirited defence of popular government—vindicating the popular party from the aspersions cast upon it by Wrixon Crowley, whom Percy assailed with a severity, not of invective, but of ar-

gumentation, and all the ingenious comments and skilful insinuations of the tortuous logic of Crowley were riven asunder, and scattered to destruction. Crowley had appealed to the times of Charles the First, hazarded several bold historical assertions, and drawn an analogy between the age of Cromwell and the days of King William. He had referred to history with the air of a man whose assertions could not possibly be confuted, even if there were an opportunity of referring at once to the historical authorities. To the surprise of the House, Percy very quietly produced Hume's History (for which, while Crowley was speaking, he had sent to the library), and in a very careless, off-hand way took up, one after another, the historical "facts" of Crowley, read out statements from Hume (the Tory historian), supplying or suggesting the very contrary deductions from those drawn by the distorting logic of Crowley. Upon his own ground of

historical literature, young Percy met the dreaded reviewer, not asking time to concoct a reply, but making an extemporary speech; the matter being supplied to him by the perverted facts and sophisticated reasoning of Crowley, whose artifices of argument were searchingly exposed by Percy, who did not leave standing one stone of the edifice that Crowley had built up with such labour. Down—down—it all went, amid the cheers of the House, while young Percy rioting in the unparalleled readiness of his reasoning powers, smote right and left, and with athletic force proved himself the sharpest and strongest debater in the House. Though for several hours the House had listened with attention to the speakers, the feelings of the members were freshened by the splendid display of Percy's masterly and masculine eloquence, which in its bold tone, and sustained energy that never flagged rose beyond debating into genuine oratory.

"By Jove! the days of Fox and Pitt are come again," cried an old Whig commoner, carried away into ecstasy of admiration at the surprising powers which Percy had exhibited. All the members of the House, after the speaker sat down, conversed aloud, with vociferous admiration of the speech to which they had listened, and some fifty or sixty crowded up to shake hands with the champion of aristocratic Whiggism. Able as were the speeches of Mackenzie and Wrixon Crowley, their speeches were forgotten; while Percy's vigorous appeal and masculine presence were fresh in the recollection of the House, which would hear no one after Percy, and proceeded to a division, in which the effects of the last telling speech were very visible.

In going out in the lobby, I was met by the crowd, when a member leaning on two other members, said, "We'll get you a pair for Monday night. Make your mind easy."

"Who talks of pairing?" cried a coarse Radical member.

"'Tis poor Penrose," cried a voice near; "he is very ill."

Up then came a Whig whipper-in, with a smirking manner, who cried—

"Lord Danvers is going to be married on Monday, and will be out of town for a week, if that will suit Mr. Penrose."

"Be it so," cried poor Penrose, in a meekly resigned tone; and he then added in his own peculiar playful manner, "How strange it is that marriage and death should be pairing off together!"

The debate had been so exciting that the recollection of it, when I went to my room at night, was so fresh and vivid that I could scarcely think once of Lady Jane. The excitement of the political world was then at the highest, and though my old political ambition slumbered, my curiosity and love of observing the moral laws which govern

society were roused by the stirring debate that I had listened to; and although no one admired more the shattering power with which Percy had closed upon the formidable ability of Wrixon Crowley, I could not help feeling when in solitude that there was, in the intense earnestness of character and spirit of moral reflection shown by Lord J. Rowland, qualities which would make their possessor one of the most vigorous and efficient statesmen of his time.

CHAPTER XV.

GABRIEL CLEVELAND'S ADVENTURE.

It was the very next morning after the famous debate, described in the preceding chapter, that I found on my table an invitation to a dinner party at the Marquis of Kelburne's. It was not often that the Marquis of Kelburne entertained, and I looked upon an invitation to his table as a decided compliment, and accepted it.

While sitting over my breakfast, in came Cumberland, radiant with good spirits, and thinking of nothing but the happiness he was to enjoy with Miss Dormer, who had fixed the marriage day for a month hence, when she should have completed some engagements with theatrical managers. He was also quite elated at the prospect which the bar opened to him, and was speculating on having a large practice as parliamentary counsel before committees of the House of Commons.

"Activity, Sir, activity; there is no principle like it. 'Gad! if all went to the worst, I think that I should be almost happy in driving a stage coach. I never could bear to be idle, and Lucy Dormer is just the girl to make one relish industry; she has herself such homely, domestic views of life, and is so different from all the saintering, do-nothing ladies amongst whom I misspent so many of my early days."

"And what of Gabriel Cleveland—I have seen nothing of him these days past?"

"Oh! have you not heard about Cleveland? Egad! such a story. You remember the attorney's wife we met down at Gravesend? Well, Cleveland scraped up an intimacy with her husband, whom he visits occasionally on business at his chambers in the city, which the wife must know something about; for he also visits the wife with great regularity, and some folk say even oftener than he goes to her husband."

"Ah! Cleveland is a fellow who will never sow his wild oats. He has got out of many a scrape before this, but he ought to be aware of the attorney's wife. She may be too clever for him."

"But you do not know half the fun about the matter. He is quite a favoured guest in the house, and dines there three times a-week. He is to dine there on to-morrow, and I have accepted an invitation

to go there to be one of a large party. He sits at the foot of the table, and is on the easiest terms with the people of the house."

"And what can Farmer think about this prank of Cleveland's frequenting a house, where he must meet with a class of society greatly inferior to that in which he is accustomed to mix?"

"Pooh! Farmer, like many other attorneys, who pride themselves on being surprisingly keen, is either too busy or stupid to see what is going on in his own establishment. But perhaps, after all, nothing is amiss, and Cleveland's reputation may give people an excuse for moving their scandalous tongues, rather than the knowledge of any particular acts of error. Besides, the respectability of the Clapton neighbourhood visit Mrs. Attorney Farmer; the doctor and parson's lady of the parish keep on the best terms with her, and, with their countenance, she can set scandal at defiance.

She is probably content to be talked of as the leading woman of fashion at Clapton—the Lady Jersey of Clapton Square! And until something desperate is found out against her, the small fry of vulgar earth will visit her, if it were only for the sake of affecting to know something of fashion, even at second hand. But I have promised to meet Lucy at rehearsal, and it is now the time; so I must be off. You see the cares of married life are beginning. So good bye, old fellow. I wish that you would think of looking out for a rib for yourself."

With a lackadaisacal sigh, and evidently in the enjoyment of great mental happiness at the prospect of being married to a woman who certainly loved him, Cumberland went away, leaving me disposed to envy his lot, and ardently wishing that Lady Jane and I were to stand in the same relation to each other as Miss Dormer and Granby Cumber-

land were filling. He had not long gone, when Gabriel Cleveland came in.

Cleveland had always been rather rakish in his aspect. He was now beginning to look very like a *roué*. The haggard look of continued dissipation was fastening on his thin and delicately shaped countenance, which had all the high and intellectual cast of a man meant for better things than a life of riot and folly. His hair was beginning to grizzle; his cheek was pale and sunken; his eyes were bloodshot, and his dress was now less neat than before. The expression of his face also was more particularly changed. He had got the look of a gentleman jockey. There was something of the sharper mingled with the appearance of gentleman in his deportment. His conversation also had greatly disimproved, and was coarser both in its topics and style. Sometimes it was downright vulgar—almost opprobriously so. He had taken to the

gaming-table more than ever. He had always a turn that way; and folk did say that he was not particularly lucky.

Cleveland had always interested me as a kind of problem in human nature. He had talents, wit, attainments, and even a fine taste, when he did not deprave his mind by low associations. But he was a heartless creature, and therein he totally differed from Granby Cumberland, who, amidst all his follies and extravagance, had many generous sympathies, and did several acts of kindness. But Cleveland was the keen, shrewd, sharp-sighted, selfish sensualist, glittering with artificial courtesy, and decked out in a robe of elegant manners, which hid the deformity of his moral nature. Every one knew that he was a rake, but it was only by close observation, and after some experience of his character, that one found out the extreme selfishness of his nature.

"Well, my boy, how goes it with you in these reforming times? Why, we shall all have to reform our characters, now that they have resolved that every borough in England must be immaculate."

"Some of us would be the better for a reform," said I, half seriously.

"What! why I am not going to be lectured by you, Wynville, when I now want you to be in one of your most obliging moods!"

"That means to lend you a hundred, or put my name in a bill for three or four hundred for you."

"Now there you are out in your calculation. I only want that you should dine with me to-day, and meet one of the most delightful women you ever saw or knew."

"What! a bachelor like you giving dinner parties. Your fair guest possibly would do well to act in the spirit of these reforming times."

"Again you are mistaken, thou oracle of

parliamentary wisdom. I am to be her guest, and not she to be mine, and I but want you to be in a friendly mood, and dine with us to-day at her house."

"What a capital comic actor you would make, Cleveland; you say grave things with a cool gravity that would electrify a Haymarket audience."

"I am not a man of mere words; for I not only say cool things, but do them also. *Facta non verba*, is my motto."

"But who is this 'lady' that you talk of?"

"You recollect the fair Laura, that we admired so much down at Gravesend; the lady, one of those upon whom I played the Moselle with?"

"Well——"

"That's the lady I am to dine with, at Beech Lodge, Clapton, with her worthy husband and herself. Farmer, the attorney, is her husband, and is an excellent fellow.

He and I have become great friends. Of course you have often heard of the Gray's Inn attorneys, Farmer, Frisby, and Frisby Sons. He has delivered me from the hands of the Philistines, got me out of several pecuniary scrapes, and has been invaluable to me as a man of business. There is a borough in Yorkshire, where he has connections and influence, and where he has been engaged at two or three general elections, on behalf of the interests of others, and he thinks it very likely that he shall be able to get me in for it."

"And so you have an idea of public life?"

"Aye! that I have," said Cleveland, who was in a state of the highest spirits, and was almost excited, when he began to talk of the prospect of being returned for the borough.

"But, Cleveland, where are you to get the money? Your affairs are dreadfully embarrassed, and how could you expect in

such times to get in for a borough without having plenty of money?"

"Oh! I shall have money enough, don't be uneasy about that. But what I want you to do now is to come out and dine with Farmer to-day. He will take it as the very greatest favour. He has a passion for being acquainted with Members of Parliament, and he looks up to the Wynvilles, of Wynville Manor, with feelings approaching to veneration. The fact is, that Farmer's father was a country attorney, who practised in Hampshire, and Farmer has a local superstition that the Wynvilles are the very flowers of the English commoners, to be classed with Byngs, Cokes, Howards, of Corby, Welds, of Lutworth, &c. &c. He will be electrified with delight when he has Mr. Wynville at his table. I can promise you a deuced good dinner; and as for the hostess, the fair Laura Farmer, I say nothing of her; I will leave you to judge or yourself."

Half against my will, he persuaded me to go with him to dine at Clapton. I really could not help feeling some anxiety to see the interior of the *ménage* described by Cleveland in such lively colours; and I was so much out of spirits, that I was glad for an evening to distract my mind.

Cleveland, at the appointed hour, called on me in his curricle, and he drove me out to Clapton, and amused me the whole way by his sharp remarks on the queer habits of Cockney land. Beech Lodge was a pretty-ish kind of suburban box—a bit of a green lawn, and a good garden behind the house, with flagged walks, and a couple of old palm trees, and some rich flowering shrubs well dispersed, gave the place a pleasing appearance. The day had been very hot; the cool air of the evening was very refreshing, and being very hungry for dinner, I was tolerably well disposed to be pleased with what I saw. The lodge was furnished inside with

a luxury that would never be suspected from the outside. In the drawing-room, the carpet was of the richest pattern and softest material. Splendid glasses reached from the ceiling to the floor; buhl tables and glittering cabinets attracted the eyes of the curious; and there was a profusion of gilding. The walls were painted in a salmon colour; a grand pianoforte was in a recess; and a very splendid portrait of Mrs. Farmer (one of Jackson's last pictures) was not one of the least brilliant on which the eye could dwell.

CHAPTER XVI.

A STRANGE CHARACTER—CLAPTON GAIETY.

I HAD leisure to look around the apartment, for there was no one to receive us. The servant said that Mrs. Farmer would presently be with us, and in a few minutes there sailed into the room the lady of the house herself.

Dressed in a lavender satin costume, curiously flowered with a foreign kind of

pattern; her hair most tastefully arranged; her shoulders and arms bare, with a light Indian shawl carelessly cast over one arm, Mrs. Farmer was certainly a figure that no one could observe once without looking at it again and again. Her bust was remarkably fine; her skin was very fair; her hair the richest brown; her eyes were uncommonly sweet and animated in their expression, and prepared one to expect that their owner had sense and penetration. Her ornaments, I could not help remarking, were of very great value. She wore earrings that must have cost a vast sum; and on either arm a bracelet, each of different pattern, made of long links of pure gold very deep, and in one of them, worn on the right arm, was a centre piece in which a circle of diamonds flashed and sparkled with vivid brilliancy.

I was quite unprepared to behold so very splendid a woman, and could scarcely have

recognised her as the Laura of the Gravesend steamer. I suppose that I must have betrayed my admiration by my countenance, for she looked very pleased. She saluted me with much care, and at once spoke very eagerly to Cleveland.

"We had no notice that you would be here so soon. Dinner was not ordered until half-past seven, and it is now only ten minutes past. Farmer has only just returned. He is in the study."

"I must go see him," cried Cleveland, who walked out of the room with all the familiarity of one who was domesticated to the house. When he left the room, Mrs. Farmer said—

"I am sure that Mr. Farmer and I are extremely obliged to the courtesy you have done us in coming without a formal invitation. Mr. Farmer has the greatest possible respect for your distinguished family, Mr. Wynville."

I bowed, but could not make out what to think of Mrs. Farmer herself, who was only too civil in profusion of thanks and compliments with which she loaded me. She spoke sometimes with the air of a woman of breeding, but occasionally great patches of vulgar sentiment showed that refined manners were not natural to her; and the homeliness of her occasional remarks contrasted badly with the lustre of her ornaments, and the luxury of her apartments.

"Farmer," thought I to myself, "is probably some rich *pavrenu*, who has selected this woman for his wife on account of her uncommon beauty. Perhaps, also, she is the daughter of some great city cheesemonger, and has brought him a large fortune along with her vulgarity. Hence her homeliness of thought, and hence her display of dress."

Farmer, accompanied by Cleveland, soon entered the room, and advanced to shake

hands with me, and after a fashion of his own, assailed me with copious gratitude for the honour I had done him in condescending to accept his poor hospitality. "But our friend Clevy [which I soon found out was the endearing appellation of Cleveland in this establishment] has a way of bringing pleasant company about him, and so well he can with all his fashionable friends."

"Clevy! Well," thought I, "this is being familiar with a vengeance." I began to be extremely sorry that I had got into such company, and would have beaten a retreat with haste, if it had been in my power. But I was anxious to see it out. Farmer himself was a small man with a perturbed countenance, on which intense cunning was stamped; he looked like the impersonation of an attorney, with his air of cat-like caution and demure sagacity. A slight cast in one of his eyes added to this sinister expression of his features.

The guests were assembled. Some person, who was connected with somebody of great influence with certain printers in the city, came in with a dreadfully important air of pompous insignificance and tremendous triviality. A Doctor Somebody and his wife, who stared at the fine ornaments of Mrs. Farmer, and a retired Russian merchant, who knew "a thing or two" (as he expressed himself) upon every public topic, and who had once a notion of being put up as a candidate on the Yellow interest for some borough, when, only for something, he would perhaps have been the member—were the chief guests. Along with them was a young gentleman, who had been the apprentice of the Russian merchant, but who had a soul above tallow, and aspired to the reputation of smashing Christianity, having published a big volume of stupid unreadable Rationalism, in which as much learning as could be picked up out

of an Eton grammar, was jumbled together with as much opinionativeness as would be found in a dozen of Presbyterian divines, and applied with ignorant impudence to the solution of the problems of Divinity. This gentleman was "the philosopher" of our party; and Mrs. Farmer told me that he was a prodigy of scholarship, and that it was such a pity his opinions prevented him from entering the Church, in which, with his talents, he might have been a bishop. Then came in last the wit of the party, Mr. Pugzby. "Oh! such a droll creature," as Mrs. Farmer said. This was a young gentleman of two-and-twenty, who had served his apprenticeship to Mr. Farmer, and had "talents for everything," according to Mrs. Farmer's account of him. He belonged to that class which is so numerous in London —the manufacturers of ready-made broad grins. He kept a large stock of jokes and epigrams upon hand, and did considerable

business in scandal and practical hoaxes. He wrote shambling verses in the albums of giggling school girls; forged autographs of *celebrities* for old maidish collectors of curiosities, and mended broken china for old ladies who gave hot suppers and "a hop" to their young neighbours. He piqued himself on being a ventriloquist, and during the second course, mewed piteously like a cat, with which brilliant and well-timed piece of foolery, the company was greatly charmed, especially when the servant cried out, "Oh! the cat—where is it?" He affected to know all about the theatres, and retailed trumpery, stereotyped anecdotes with the air of a gossiping Talleyrand, and showed so much aptitude for low fun and foolery, that he proved himself almost, if not quite, equal to the third-rate line of business at a country theatre—a very Theodore Hook of the back slums.

Such was our party. I had the honour of handing into the dining-room the fair hostess; and I found that, being a Member of Parliament, and a Wynville of Wynville Manor, I was an object of reverential awe to every one, except the beastly joker, who caricatured the style of poor Hook. The dining-room was equally luxurious as the drawing-room, and the table was set forth with an ample repast. There was, however, more of the show of luxury than its reality. There were several kinds of wine, but none of them of any value, except some tolerable sherry. The dinner, however, was very well for Clapton, and only a great deal too good for some of the folk at the table.

"Wynville Manor is a splendid old place indeed," said Farmer, with a rapturous expression. "Such water! Such gardens! and such an air of aristocracy over everything!"

"The possession of an old demesne, that

has been in one's family for ages, must, no doubt, generate the aristocratic sentiment," said the Doctor, who talked platitudes over his sherry, with as great an air as Coleridge puffing out his smoke and aphorisms together.

"Oh! I do so love old places," said the Doctor's lady; "there is something so beautiful about them."

"If you want to see a real fine old place," said the Russian merchant, "one of the grandest in England is Mowbray's Court, the seat of the Mowbrays. Were you ever at Mowbray's Court?"

"Was Mr. Wynville ever at Mowbray's Court?" said Cleveland, laughing. "Why, he is a most intimate friend of the family, and has been on a visit there for weeks together."

"Oh! indeed," cried the Russian merchant. "Well, when I was riding near it, a couple of years since, I went to see it, and

I was seldom more pleased with any nobleman's demesne. The air of antiquity of the Court—the old park and timbers—the gardens—all tell of other days and generations."

"Yes," said I, "it is certainly a very noble old place, and has been a great while in the family." I had scarcely made this remark when my attention was attracted by observing Mrs. Farmer's face, which was crimson for a moment, and her ears were a fiery red.

"Have you ever seen Mowbray's Court?" cried the Doctor; "you have seen so many beautiful places."

"Yes; I have—that is—no—from a distance. I think that I once saw it; but it is a great many years ago. But, Doctor, what are you going to eat now? Will you let me advise you to take one of those lamb cutlets, breaded with spinach. I think you will find them to your taste. Mrs. ——, [addressing the Doctor's wife, I forget their

names], will you try an oyster *patè* before the second course? You will find them very good." And thus, with great earnestness and vehemence of manner, Mrs. F. pressed all the guests to do justice to the dinner before them, and led off the conversation from the subject of Mowbray's Court as much as possible. I thought that there was an object in all that, and my curiosity was awakened.

The Theodore Hook of the back slums resolved, however, to show what knowledge he had of "high people," and with familiarity addressed me—

"What a thundering fine woman, Mr. Wynville, Lady Jane Mowbray is! To please me, I think she is the finest woman in all our aristocracy. Such eyes! Such a smile! Such a figure! Oh! she is positively quite superb. Have you ever seen Lady Jane Mowbray, Mrs. Farmer?" continued the Clapton Theodore.

I looked at Mrs. Farmer, and again her

face was flushed, but with a bold attempt she said, "No; never," and again made a dart to change the conversation, and again she succeeded. I could not possibly conceive what connection there could be between Mowbray's Court, its inmates, and Mrs. Farmer. I was quite at a loss to surmise what could make Mrs. Farmer blush or look confused when Mowbray's Court was discussed. Had she ever been there? Did she know any of the family?

But perhaps, after all, there was no connection between Mowbray's Court and the cause (whatever it was) which made Mrs. Farmer look so confused. Perhaps my curiosity was excited by no valid reasons. Possibly some unpleasant recollections connected with relatives, who might have been mixed up with the political electioneering of Lord Mowbray, and might have smarted under the exercise of his official rule, might have caused some unpleasant recollections to

flit across her mind, and I soon ceased to think of Mrs. Farmer's confusion.

She was so very beautiful a woman that one could not be disposed to embarrass her by turning the conversation to subjects evidently disagreeable to her; for beauty, after all, is highly prepossessing, let people say what they like about the deceitfulness of appearances.

The matter which occupied my attention most was the familiarity of Gabriel Cleveland with such a set of guests, at whom, in other days, he would have turned up his nose. *That* was indeed a mystery. He was commonly addressed by the name of "Clevy" by Farmer, and Cleveland himself was in a state of the highest spirits and enjoyment, sitting at the foot of the attorney's table. The company at the table were evidently patent to Cleveland, who knew all about them, and Mrs. Farmer so often spoke about "dear Doctor Damer," the rector of the

parish, and his charming wife, and alluded to the intimate terms on which their families existed, that it was ridiculous to suppose that Cleveland could ever be suspected of paying attention to Mrs. Farmer, a married woman, the wife of his solicitor. I was ill-natured to suppose that Cleveland had no other object than that of intrigue in his intimacy with Farmer; but I little knew what a game Cleveland was playing, and how matters really stood.

On coming home at night Cleveland parried my quizzing about himself and Mrs. Farmer. He seemed pleased to hear me talk so warmly of her beauty, a theme on which he himself descanted with considerable energy; but he steadily denied all my insinuations that he was getting up a flirtation with her.

CHAPTER XVII.

PERILS OF MATRIMONY.

The marriage of Lady Jane Mowbray and Lord Lingard had now become a standing topic of discussion in society, and it would be vain for me to try and describe the state of my mind at the time when I heard in every company praises of Lady Jane's beauty mingled with wonder at the choice of a husband she had made. "Money!

Money!" was the cause to which it was universally attributed. The dowry which Lady Jane was to receive on her union with Lord Lingard was preposterously exaggerated, and I surmised that none suspected how totally ruined the Mowbray family would be if this marriage did not take place. In fact, people had not the least idea of two things—first, that the rent-roll of Lord Mowbray was so many thousands below what it was guessed at; and next, that the encumbrances upon the estates—the great mortgages due to Lord Lingard—amounted to so large a figure. Neither did people know the true state of the facts, about the consent of Lady Jane being based only in a religious sense of self-sacrifice—that she was a voluntary victim for the sake of preserving the fortunes of her house.

Little did the world suppose that she was acting upon the motive which really animated her. Little did people think of the

heroism of spirit she was showing in wedding Lord Lingard. It pained me often to hear the comments made upon her conduct, and to listen to people underrating her elevation of character, not suspecting that her union with the *millionnaire* lord was in total abnegation of her selfish promptings.

I was dining one day at the Duke of Fleetwood's, and after dinner, when the company were at coffee in the drawing-room (the party was a small one), the Marchioness of Trafford said—

"You recollect, Mr. Wynville, all the arguments that used to be in our circles at Kingsleigh about 'the heroine' as poor Sir Charles Maclaurin used to call Lady Jane?"

"Yes! I recollect them very well. Maclaurin was a great admirer of Lady Jane."

"What would he say now, if he were alive, when she is going to be married to Lord Lingard for the sake of a large dowry?"

"But, perhaps, that is not her object in marrying him."

"Oh, it is doubtless a love-match on her part," said Lady Clara Rowland, herself a great beauty, and one whom I always thought jealous of the admiration which Lady Jane excited.

"A love-match with a vengeance," cried the Marchioness of Trafford. "Well! I cannot conceive how Lady Jane—one who always affected to be so enthusiastic a partisan of the old nobility—should choose Lord Lingard for her husband—an elderly man, ugly, and undistinguished by aught save his wealth."

"I remember the enthusiasm," said Lady Clara, "with which you, Mr. Wynville, said that a union with Lord Lingard would be profaning the beauty of Lady Jane!"

"Yes!" cried I, "but I recollect also that Mr. Percy intimated that many objects might tempt an ambitious woman to unite

in matrimony with Lord Lingard, and that he particularised Lord Lingard's influence with the cabinet—the possession of his splendid house—and the means of exercising a liberal patronage of arts and letters—as objects which might dazzle a woman who aimed at social and political influence, and a woman like Lady Jane might consent to take the position of Lady Lingard. She might make Lingard House the first *re-union* of all the art and talent of the party which she wishes to succeed, and give the Tory party the advantage of having a rival to Holland House, in the excellence of its entertainment and brilliancy of its company."

"But Lady Jane," observed the Marchioness, "always affected to despise new wealth, and was indignant at the power which mere money possessed in society. Now Lord Lingard's family is of very recent origin; he is himself looked upon as a city lord, as a mere titled merchant, and I

cannot conceive how she can reconcile her sentiments with her marriage to such a person. The censorious will certainly set it down to money."

"She will make a very beautiful widow, and a very rich one," said Lady Clara. "They say Lord Lingard is not a very good life."

It was evident to me that the real state of affairs in the Mowbray family had been carefully concealed, and that no one knew the exact nature of the tie which existed between Lord Mowbray and Lord Lingard—of the pressing pecuniary relation which was between them. Lady Jane's character was entirely unappreciated, because the facts of her situation were completely unknown. I felt that I was the only person in the world who saw the full force of her resolute and unselfish disposition, and knew that, in marrying Lord Lingard, she was sacrificing herself for the sake of her family.

But the more I pondered on the state of affairs in the Mowbray family, the more hopeless was my chance of being able to obtain the hand of Lady Jane. I had not the least doubt that her love for me had been stronger than ever she had allowed herself to suppose, or than she had betrayed to me by her manners — despite her guarded deportment. I felt that the marriage of Lady Jane was only one of a thousand instances in which the evil that runs through all society was exhibited, and that it was a painful proof of the little chance there is in this world of obtaining unalloyed happiness.

Before I had seen Lady Jane, I had been perfectly happy. In the pursuit of high political ambition I had found a channel for displaying my talents and employing my energies. Active life had taken me out of the world of dreaming and contemplation, in which I had indulged too much, and

given me healthy impulses, and supplied me with practical motives to exertion. But since I had fallen in love with Lady Jane, and believed her sacrificed to another, I had lost my relish for politics, and was sinking into a dreamy and disappointed kind of character. I lounged about the clubs, and sauntered down the streets, loitering along without feeling that keen enjoyment of existence which those possess whose hopes are brisk, and whose expectations have a rational certainty of being realized. In this respect, I was quite a contrast to Granby Cumberland, who was in the highest state of mental happiness, and even to Gabriel Cleveland, who was apparently very happy upon his debts, his duns, and his incessant dissipation. I envied St. Leger his book-worm enjoyment, feeding upon every publication that issued from the public press, and revelling in the *bizarrerie* of his curiosity-mongering taste in literature, his strange but true

anecdotes of real life, his omnivorous appetite for the general history of contemporary characters.

While strolling down Pall Mall, I heard the well-known rough voice of Lord Mowbray behind me.

"Well, Wynville, how goes the town? What news is in the wind?"

"That is a question Lord Mowbray ought to be better able to answer than he of whom he asks it."

"Nay, not so; a member for a rotten borough has time enough to collect the news; he has no constituents to pester him; and you are on the news-making side of politics, for the *outs* always get their news second-hand."

"I thought that your Lordship was in the country."

"I was till last evening; but we have come up to town for some shopping of Lady Jane's. She is come to choose her wedding clothes."

I started at the words, and felt my heart knock at my ribs as these words came from Lord Mowbray with his customary carelessness. In a voice whose tremulous tone would, I feared, attract the notice of the keen peer, I asked—

"And is Lady Jane's marriage to be so soon? I thought it was not to have taken place for some weeks."

"Neither will it," said Lord Mowbray; "it will not be for at least four weeks. I may as well now tell you that the wedding is to be quite a private affair, and is to take place at Dawlish, in our cottage *ornée* there, where the old field marshal is 'husbanding out life's taper to the close.' He has become extremely feeble, and could not come up either to town, or back to Mowbray's Court; and Lady Jane wishes to be married in the old veteran's presence. Lord Lingard has a seat in North Devon, and it has been settled that the ceremony is to

take place at Dawlish, in presence of my brother the bishop, who will officiate, and the other members of the family; and the married pair will spend the honeymoon at Lord Lingard's."

My heart sickened at the intelligence, but more remained to be told.

"Lady Jane is now actually choosing her wedding clothes. By the way, Wynville, you are not looking at all well. What is the matter with you?"

"Pooh! it is nothing. I have not been out of town, and the late hours of this extraordinary session, the heavy committee work, have knocked me up somewhat."

"Come dine with us to-day at our hotel at six o'clock. We are going to this new play of the *Hunchback*. Lady Jane is anxious to see it; she has heard so much of the beauty in it. We will dine at six o'clock, in order to be at the theatre early; and between ourselves, I do not want to be

in my place in the House of Lords to-night; and I know that they will be looking for me about eight o'clock, to divide on this motion of Aberdeen, and they will never think of looking for me in the private box at the theatre." And Lord Mowbray laughed at the idea of giving his party the slip for the night.

"To dine with Lady Jane again!" thought I, as I had accepted the invitation. "What madness was it induced me to go again into her company? Would it not be wiser to fly from her charms, than expose myself to the torture of seeing her taken away from me by Lord Lingard?" And yet, by a species of fascination, I allowed myself to be again drawn into her company.

"We shall be a *parti quarré*," said Lord Mowbray. "Lingard promised to come with us if he possibly can manage; but he has just now a pressure of matters to attend to."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FLUTTERINGS IN THE CAGE.

"Mr. Wynville, I am very happy to see you," said Lady Jane, with one of her sweetest smiles, as I entered the small drawing-room of one of the private hotels in Jermyn Street, where Lord Mowbray was staying. "So you are coming to the play to-night with us?"

"Yes, Lady Jane, I am to enjoy that

pleasure in your company. I was agreeably surprised when Lord Mowbray hailed me to-day in Pall Mall."

"He has just gone down to White's for a few minutes, but I expect him in every moment with Lord Lingard. My father told me that he pressed you to come down to Mowbray's Court next week."

"But I made him no promise that I would go, though there are many reasons," said I, looking at Lady Jane, "why I should be very glad to accept his hospitality."

"And there are very many reasons why it would be better for you not to go there just now. I should prefer at present, until after a certain ceremony is performed, to be left to my own thoughts as much as possible. Though I am resigned to my lot, if not contented with it, I do not desire to be—to be"—and she stammered, and was a little confused—"to be annoyed," she

continued, "with useless recollections, or perhaps solicitations."

"You may make your mind easy on the latter point. I understand and appreciate your motives in consenting to this marriage; and knowing the force of your character, I feel that it would be quite hopeless for me to attempt to change your determination. As poor Maclaurin more than once said to me,—'Lady Jane has the heart of a heroine;' and it seems to me that you have made your maxim:—'Long flourish the Mowbrays, though Lady Jane's heart may break.'"

"You are not very far from the mark in saying so; but I must disclaim the ambition of being a heroine. It is a part that I do not care to essay. But it is my wish that you would not accept my father's invitation to Mowbray's Court."

"Your wishes shall be strictly obeyed; and when does the ceremony take place?"

"In about a month. I thought my father told you that it was to take place at Dawlish, in Devonshire; and here he comes."

We heard laughing on the stairs, and in another minute the door was thrown open, and in came Lord Mowbray along with Lord Lingard. The latter advanced with an air of gallantry to pay his respects to Lady Jane, who received him in a quiet and calmly serene manner—that manner which, to an observer of human nature, expressed the most perfect indifference. It interested me to observe the way in which she submitted to her fate. There was a calmness in her manner of speaking to him, and a sustained temper in enduring his dull attempt at wit and humour, that showed to me that her spirit was equal to the tremendous destiny that she was accepting, in marrying a man whom she neither loved nor respected. Her firmness of character I felt would be equal to the task; and as I

listened to the manner in which she dis cussed the stirring subjects of the time, I felt that in her great mental resources, her taste for the arts, her literary talents, and appreciation of intellectual merits, that she would have great resources against despondency or gloom.

Lord Lingard was exquisitely dressed, and his large figure looked portly and almost majestic, as with a complacency of manner, and with the shrewdness of a keen man of the world, he discussed all the current topics. He was a decided trimmer in politics, and was a representative of what Mr. Coleridge called "the plutocracy" of England; and it was almost difficult to determine whether he most feared the mob and their direful passions, or disliked the old nobility and their pride. He was not a vulgar man in his ideas of manners and society; his strong understanding and practical sagacity saved him from being ridicu-

lous; he was rather a materialist in politics (and probably in religion), looked on Monarchy as a useful tradition, and estimated the Church as a sort of high police for keeping the swinish multitude in order. He called himself a Conservative; but looked on England from the money point of view, caring neither for the idealism of the "constitution," nor for the well-being of the masses, but for rents—revenues—dividends.

During dinner Lady Jane and he carried on a discussion as to how Lingard House was to be conducted, in which he advocated the side of exclusiveness, and Lord Mowbray that of excessive popularity and boundless hospitality; and Lady Jane, while supporting the propriety of having an inner select circle confined to a few, intimated in a manner that showed she would be likely to carry her point, that she should like to have a *re-union* of all the literary and artistic celebrities of London.

"By celebrities I mean the really distin-

guished intellects of the day—the Landseers and Wilkies in art—the Babbages in science—the Hallams in scholarship. Mind that I do not confound the notorieties along with the celebrities; as soon would I make no distinction between the aristocracy and the plebeians. I should not wish to see my rooms crowded with all that clamorous horde, who try to stun society into admiring their genius and their talents—the mere pedlars of the literary world."

"The class you speak of," said Lord Lingard, "is becoming far too powerful in this country. The press is the most irresponsible power in the community; and authors and such people ought to be kept down, until they win a decided reputation for true talent and character."

"Nine-tenths of the so-called authors of the day," said Lord Mowbray, "are the mere spawn of the puffing system; they are the mere clerks of the publishers, who re-

print and republish old matter, garnished with a few bits of modern knowledge; clap Mr. Somebody's name on the title-page, and gull the public about 'a valuable work of the greatest interest.'"

"Yes; I would not tolerate the presence of the charlatans of literature in my house," said Lady Jane, "nor would I go lion-hunting; but I would readily open Lingard House to persons of real talent, if they were accredited to me by proper recommendations. I dislike mere noisy reputations, and should prefer extending the sunshine of aristocratic patronage to modesty and sterling worth."

The talk at the table continued much in the same strain, and no one could have suspected that Lady Jane was undergoing such a sacrifice of her feelings, as I had reason to know that she was making. She left us to our wine the moment that the dessert was put on the table; coffee was ordered to be ready in the drawing-room in a few minutes

for those who cared to drink it before going to the play.

I went into the drawing-room as soon as I could without remark, leaving the two peers together, affecting to suppose that they would best be alone. I found Lady Jane in the drawing-room, and I saw that she was in tears!

She turned her head away, when I entered, but in an instant met me again with perfectly well-assumed calmness.

"You see," cried she, alluding to the conversation at the dinner-table; "you see how well I have been mapping out my future life, and arranging for the part I am to play as Lady Lingard. I will try and make Lingard House a very agreeable place, and endeavour to make it the resort of worthy and brilliant people. I shall have the happiness, I trust, of being a useful member of society, and endeavour to do as much good as I can. Nay, do not look so

grave and gloomy, Mr. Wynville; I know what you are thinking of—but remember, all that subject is entirely at an end, and we are only to meet henceforward as friends."

I forget what I said. I remember some vague incoherent remarks, which may have meant anything or nothing. The coach was at the door—the two peers came into the drawing-room—I drank a cup of coffee—and in a few minutes we were all four whirled off to the theatre.

The play was the *Hunchback*, and the beautiful scenes in the third and fourth acts, where Julia meets her former lover, and where she finally calls on Master Walter to break their "hated nuptials," I could perceive had considerable effect on Lady Jane. At the close of that splendid burst of declamation, where Julia cries—"Do it, I say, or leave the deed to me!" Lady Jane was visibly moved, and the applica-

tion of the scene acting before us to our former position with regard to each other, made us somewhat more reserved in our manners for the time than we otherwise should have been. We were almost afraid to comment upon the mimic drama before us, while we ourselves were acting in a stirring scene of reality!

CHAPTER XIX.

FATE OF CLEVELAND—CHOOSING A WEDDING DRESS.

As I was walking down to Brookes's the next day, St. Leger came up to me breathless.

"Wynville," he cried, "such extraordinary news as I bring you. Have you heard about Gabriel Cleveland?"

"No! what of him?"

"He is to be married this day at one

o'clock, in the new church, at the Strand. It is now twelve o'clock; come off with me, and see the wedding."

"You are joking; he would not fail to have told me that he was going to be married."

"I tell you that Mr. Wilson, the proctor, just came into my chambers, and told me that he actually saw the license for his wedding."

"And to whom is he going to be married?"

"Aye! that's the joke of all. The license says that he is going to be married to a married woman, and I confess that I have a *penchant* to see a fellow commit bigamy, as I have never seen that offence committed before my eyes!"

"Pray, cease joking, and tell me the plain facts without exaggeration."

"Well, the simple fact is, that he is (if the license is to be credited) going to marry Mrs. Farmer, of Beech Lodge, Clapton; and

Farmer's friends, Simcox and Featherstone, the attorneys, are in utter amazement, and have gone off to Farmer to try and get matters explained. It was Simcox told me that the ceremony was certainly to be performed at one o'clock to-day, in the new church at the Strand."

St. Leger was so circumstantial and perfectly serious in his communication, that I could not resist believing him, and joined him in going, without delay, in the direction of the Strand. On our way, we met Cumberland, who had just come from breakfasting with Miss Dormer, and escorting her to the rehearsal of one of the plays in which she was to perform for nearly the last time. We all went in great curiosity, and on arriving opposite the church, I beheld four or five gentlemen, who had come, like ourselves, for the purpose of observation, and who were identified by St. Leger as city attorneys, and acquaintances of Farmer.

"Can this be true what we hear," said one of these, walking up to Cumberland; "can it be possible that Mr. Cleveland is going to elope with Mrs. Farmer; are they mad? Or how is it to be all explained?"

A carriage and pair, with a servant in the dicky, whom I recognised to be Cleveland's valet, drove up. The carriage stopped at the church gate, and was evidently packed for travelling. Just at the moment of its taking up position near the railings round the church, there came in sight the Russian merchant, whom I had met at Clapton, accompanied by Farmer himself, with a face in which anger, astonishment, and excitement, were mingled together. The group of attorneys prepared to escort Farmer.

At this very moment the church door opened, and Cleveland, dressed as for a wedding, with Mrs. Farmer leaning on his arm, her face radiant with smiles, appeared to our view. On seeing us assembled

outside, and catching a view of Attorney Farmer and his companions, he appeared for a moment disconcerted, and perhaps ashamed. But he then burst out into a fit of laughter, and, whispering something to Mrs. Farmer, advanced boldly forward and saluted us.

"Ah! Cumberland! so you are come to congratulate Mrs. Cleveland and myself. St. Leger, allow me to introduce you to my lovely bride—Mr. St. Leger; Mrs. Cleveland."

Then, catching the eye of Farmer, who was standing staring with stupid astonishment, Cleveland with consummate *sang froid* said—

"Mr. Farmer, allow me to introduce you—Mr. Farmer; Mrs. Cleveland: Mrs. Cleveland; Mr. Farmer. Mr. Simcox; Mrs. Cleveland: Mrs. Cleveland; Mr. Simcox"—and so he rapidly introduced Mrs. Farmer to the assembled spectators. He

was not abashed, but to do her justice her face was covered with confusion, a fact which was noticed by Cleveland's quick eye, who immediately prepared to lead her away as fast as possible.

My astonishment was very great; I really knew not what to make of it; nor did Granby Cumberland. But St. Leger, who was standing by us, looked very thoughtful, and when asked what he thought of the affair, only said that he had a vague recollection of having seen that woman's face somewhere before.

The attorneys were equally puzzled, and one of them went up to Farmer for an explanation; but his face, stern, morose, and fierce with anger, repelled him from asking any explanation. Great amazement was expressed at the transaction. The attorneys, however, went off to their business, without delay, and left us discussing the matter after the carriage had rattled

away for Brighton, and after Cleveland had saluted us all with a farewell waive of the hand and a great burst of laughter.

While we were talking amongst ourselves the Russian merchant came up and said—

"Well, gentlemen, that is one of the queerest affairs I ever heard of. Only imagine, that, after having lived these four years with Farmer, as his wife; and after having been passed off on his friends and acquaintances as his regularly-wedded and lawful spouse, it now turns out that Farmer was never married at all to the woman, but that he picked her up in the country, somewhere. I protest that I never heard a more extraordinary business."

We all expressed our amazement, and I was horribly shocked at the fact of Cleveland making such a disreputable marriage; a union which not all the uncommon beauty of Mrs. Farmer could justify in the world. I saw that by this marriage he had ostra-

cised himself from that class of society which by his high birth and talents he had an undoubted right to mingle with. Cumberland looked grave upon this disagreeable intelligence, and I could easily surmise what was passing through his mind, and that he was thinking of the terrible affair of his own first marriage, into which he had been so artfully drawn. As for St. Leger he looked more thoughtful than before, and I could not help supposing that he was acquainted with some more secrets respecting Mrs. Farmer.

I called in Jermyn Street to try and find Lady Jane at home. She was not at home, but Lord Mowbray met me just as I was leaving the hotel, and to him I immediately told the extraordinary wedding that I had been a witness to. After his first burst of astonishment was over, he cried out—

"Well! the impudence and audacity of that woman, Fanny Pye, beats everything

I could fancy. Ten years ago she lived at Mowbray's Court as a waiting-maid, and the Duchess of Fleetwood took a fancy to her, and we let her go to Kingsleigh, where she was seduced by Lord Hungerford. From his hands she passed to old Lord Moxon, in Dorsetshire; he became quite a fool under her auspices, and, like an idiot, left her thirty thousand pounds. Farmer, the attorney, drew the will, and I heard various doubts at the time expressed as to whether Lord Moxon was *compos mentis* at the time. The next thing I heard of her was that she had married Farmer, whom I thought a very clever kind of unscrupulous fellow, fit for low electioneering. But I see it all—the woman, Fanny Pye, never gave Farmer any of her gold. She quietly waited until she could make a set at some person of birth or social position, who might give her his name, and now she has secured Gabriel Cleveland for her husband,

as she calculates that he may be a baronet one of these days, if Gaspar dies unmarried, and folk say he is thinking of becoming a Jesuit."

"But what could induce Gabriel Cleveland to marry such a woman, to brand himself with the disgrace of being tied for life to a man's cast-off mistress?"

"Want of money, want of means. He is head and ears in debt, has been repeatedly in the Fleet, and owes money to everybody —to yourself, Wynville, amongst a host of others."

I could not deny that Cleveland did owe me money, though I wondered how Lord Mowbray found it out; but that noble lord prided himself on finding out small secrets of every kind. The recklessness of Cleveland had been increasing so much of late that, when I came to consider of matters, I was not so much astonished as I had been at first.

"Cleveland," said Lord Mowbray, "is just one of those men who would commit suicide in desperation, and he probably would have left this life, if this woman, who is not only very beautiful, but very rich, had not come in his way and tempted him to hazard his life longer upon this planet. Indeed, both he and his brother Gaspar are striking examples of the truth of Swift's odd saying, that your 'nice men are always men of nasty ideas.'"

"We shall hear of Cleveland setting up as a Radical Reformer before long, and looking for the support of some puritanical, psalm-singing constituency, in virtue of his perfectly immaculate principles."

"Very probably," said Lord Mowbray, "and you Whigs can get him to make all the motions that you do not want to commit yourselves to. You will employ him and others of the same sort to keep up excitement in the popular party for the sake of damaging our party."

A bishop then came in to visit Lord Mowbray about the Tithe Commutation Act, and I took my leave. On sauntering down Regent Street I was attracted by some pretty jewellery of a curious pattern in the window of Hodgson and Dodgers, and entered their warerooms for the purpose of making some purchase. While leaning over the counter looking at some wares, my ear was caught by the sound of a familiar voice.

"I should prefer," said Lady Jane (for it was her), "a colour not so showy, a blue of a fainter shade."

I looked down the shop, and before the counter, where silks and satins were spread before the shopman, there was Lady Jane evidently employed in the act of choosing her wedding dress. Lady Musgrave and Lady Ludlow were standing beside her.

"There she is," thought I, "choosing her wedding clothes. Thus she is going to the sacrifice, resigning herself to her fate, and immolating her life for the sake of the pride

of the Mowbrays. Well, it cannot be denied that she is a bold and determined spirit. If Lady Jane had been born a queen, she would have played her part with signal success."

I went home rapidly, in a bitter and excited mood of mind. I was obliged to search for some political papers that I had mislaid, and in doing so I stumbled on a parcel, which I did not recognise at first. I opened it, and ha! there were the pale amber and blue satin dresses that I had bought at the little town of Donbridge, on that delightful day when Lady Jane and I had gone together to see the ruins of Donbridge Abbey. Ah! what sad and bitter thoughts the sight of these two dresses called up in my mind. It was one of these very dresses that in my castle building I had resolved Lady Jane should wear on the occasion of changing her name from Mowbray to Wynville. And *now* I had just beheld her choosing the wedding clothes of Lady Lingard.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DYING STATESMAN.

The time that was to elapse between the marriage of Lady Jane appeared to me an interval of prolonged torture. So long as she was not actually another's, my mind would revert to the day-dreams when I still believed that it was in my power to secure her hand. But all hope was now to vanish in a few short days, when I was to see her enchained in matrimony.

I heard several persons discuss the appearance of Lady Jane, and it was commonly remarked how grave her face had become, and that something like sternness had settled on her features. Every one remarked it, and I could not help fancying that now and again thoughts of him who had offered his first love, would intrude upon the mind of Lady Jane.

"She certainly looks very unlike one who expects to be a happy wife," said Cumberland. "Miss Dormer remarked Lady Jane's austerity of demeanour the other morning, when she stood near her purchasing some articles at a bazaar. Her features have a very different expression from those of my dear Lucy, who looks like happiness itself."

"Yes," said I. "Miss Dormer certainly seems very happy, and from my heart I wish you and her every happiness. I regret so much that I cannot be at your wedding as I

must be at Torquay with my father, who has sent an urgent message desiring to see me."

"Well, under the circumstances I suppose the paternal mandate must be obeyed. At such a critical moment I should be sorry to prevent a son from ministering to the comforts of his father's bedside. So Lucy and myself must only accept your good wishes instead of your presence at our wedding."

Lady Jane and I had more than once exchanged remarks, when during those few thrilling days of my life I met with her in London. She spoke with calm and quiet dignity, and reminded me more than once that I should not divulge to mortal the sentiments which we had formerly exchanged to each other. She said that she was not uneasy about my taking any advantage, or committing any impropriety with respect to the relations in which we had once been as lovers, for she said one morning, with a heavenly smile—

"I feel assured, Mr. Wynville, that I am not mistaken in your character, and although you know more about my heart than any other mortal does, I know that you have the spirit of a gentleman, and will never by look, word, or gesture, indicate to the world, that I once allowed you to address the language of something more than friendship."

"I feel honoured by your opinion of me, Lady Jane, and it is the only consolation I have."

"We must not speak of consolation, as if we were under a dire misfortune. This is a world full of trouble and trials; and moral courage can only be shown and exercised in the patient endurance of evils. If desperate reverses and terrible evils had not been endured by my forefathers in days of yore, do you think that the Mowbrays would have such a name in history? It is in vain to look for perfect happiness. The dark shadow of evil, sooner or later, is

thrown upon every person. Pain, or poverty, or ruined fame, or blasted affections, are the destiny of all men at some period, and we must only submit to our lot. The cross comes sooner or later; and if we are not to falter under its load, it can only be by recollecting the Cross endured by Divinity itself. The world has still many consolations in the shape of duties discharged, and virtues exercised. Bad as the world is, it will only make it worse, as old Jeremy Taylor says, 'to sit down on our own little handful of thorns!' No! we must endure to the end."

But notwithstanding the religious feeling blended with the heroical spirit of Lady Jane, it was easy to see that the marriage with Lord Lingard was a tremendous trial to her; and people whispered all sorts of stories, and said that she was beginning to repent of the alliance. But I felt that the marriage was certain to take place, as from

a variety of private sources I learned the condition of the fortunes of Lord Mowbray; and as I knew that the only thing to save Mowbray's Court from the hammer was the wedding of the proud and beautiful daughter of the house with the wealthy Lord Lingard.

A few days before the time appointed for the wedding, I was obliged to start for Torquay, to attend upon my father's dying bed. My poor mother was in a state of great affliction, and I felt sadly depressed myself, as I lounged about the beautiful little town of Torquay. I saw there so many wrecks of life—the shattered remains of the old and young—all doomed to decay, that the place affected me with intense gravity. When we are under the pressure of any striking or severe misfortune, we get strangely indifferent to the world, and think little of its dignities or its events. Our spirits become broken and subdued into the torpor of despair, or

the apathy of indifference; and we float along the current, not caring how soon we are to sink ourselves. Such was the state of my feelings at Torquay, as my declining father spoke in sadness of the brilliant life of elegant worthlessness which his conscience accused him of having led. Nature alone looked beautiful in my eyes, and I turned with unsated approbation to the headlands breaking through the mists—to the shores of Devonshire fringed to the tide-mark with vivid green, and to the beautiful blue of that azure sea which washes the Devonian shore.

The early poetical feelings of my youth, which had been repressed by the hard habits of a worldly politician, again bloomed under the grave teaching of disappointment, and under the smiling beauty of the sea-coast scenery of South Devon. How well do I recollect those days that I passed at Torquay. I used, after leaving my father's

room, stroll up the hills, breaking away from the town and its troops of worn and attenuated invalids; and my mind, under the influence of sea and sky, would soar beyond the fleeting scene. I longed for the facility of a rhymster to arrest and fix the spirit of glittering image, and flashing revelations of an ideal world, that glistened before my fancy. My mind was soothed, as it was also excited, by this current of sentimental emotion.

I was seated, one day, with both my parents, discussing some matters with Johnson, of Exeter, a leading attorney on the Western Circuit, who had been recommended to my father. He startled me excessively by saying that Lord Mowbray and Lady Jane Mowbray were expected at the cottage *ornée*, at Dawlish, where old Field Marshal Mowbray was lingering out his days.

"The poor old field marshal," said my

father; "I remember him dining at Carlton House nearly forty years ago, and what a fine stout man he was then," continued he, "although his hair was grey, and his face furrowed from severe service."

"Lady Jane Mowbray," said Johnson, anxious to show off his knowledge of events in the aristocratic circle, "is going to be married to Lord Lingard, and the ceremony is to take place at Dawlish, in presence of the old field marshal, who would not be happy if he did not witness the nuptials of his lovely niece, one of the loveliest women in all England, I have been told."

"Is the wedding certainly to take place at Dawlish?" cried my father, who, though on the point of leaving this world, clung to worldly things and thoughts from habit.

"Oh! most certainly, Sir," said Mr. Johnson, "for our house is doing part of the law papers; and I am ordered to attend at Dawlish on the day after the morrow,

to meet Lord Lingard and Lord Mowbray, on business."

I know not why, I really cannot tell, but some inexplicable impulse made me ride over that afternoon to Teignmouth, and walk on to Dawlish, where I gazed with curiosity at the cottage *ornée*, where the marriage of Lady Jane was to take place. It was a small house, flanked by two pretty terraces, and commanded a magnificent prospect of the sea. The Bay of Babbacombe looked especially fine with its stately headlands, and the pretty cottages, about Otterey St. Mary, glancing with their white sails against the deep blue waters of the ocean. I surveyed the spot with interest, and it was only at night I returned to Torquay.

The next day I was on thorns, despite myself, to hear news from Dawlish, and I changed my mind several times on the propriety of my going to pay my respects to the Mowbray family. The wedding was to

be private. I was not asked to it, nor had I any claim to be asked there as a guest.

I resolved, however, not to go to visit Lord Mowbray, or her whom I continued still vainly to love, and being at last so determined, that I would not intrude myself in a circle where my presence might be very painful to one of its members, and be unsought for by the rest, I resolved to let things take their course. My mind received some relief from discharging the duties of attending on my father, who was much in need of comfort and society. At leisure hours I enjoyed walking about the very beautiful scenery of the sea-shore, at Torquay, and nature contributed, in some degree, to soothe my vexed and disappointed spirit.

Several days passed thus, and I was condemned to hear constantly of the approaching marriage of Lady Jane. The Exeter attorney, Johnson, had occasion to

visit our little circle constantly, and he never omitted an opportunity of turning the conversation on the topic of Lord Lingard's marriage, in order to repeat for the fiftieth time, that he was engaged upon executing a variety of most important law papers for Lord Lingard. The approaching marriage received additional notoriety in the neighbouring towns, from the fact of Lord Lingard being a landholder, in Devonshire, and from his possessing a large seat near Bideford.

Not long elapsed before it was announced in the public prints that Lord Lingard had arrived in Devonshire. Johnson, the attorney, was more than usually prosy on the occasion, and the marriage was a standing topic of discussion in the little circle at Torquay. My mind had become resigned to it as a necessity, as a piece of fatality, and I never was less inclined to take a hopeful or a sanguine view

of life, than during that sojourn at Torquay. The sight of all the invalids was enough to lower the tone of one's spirits, and the sight of so much suffering contributed to make me feel strongly that the cup of human life is dashed with many bitters.

One of the invalids, staying at Torquay, was a Mr. Twycross, a distinguished Chancery barrister, whose success at the Bar had been extremely rapid, and whom many looked upon as certain to become Lord Chancellor one day. But his constitution gave way, and he retired from the profession, falling back upon contemplation and a life of study. He would now and again have a sharp twinge of pain, as he saw the numbers of his old competitors passing him in the race of life, and striding forward to eminence and fame. Twycross was one of the best practical moral philosophers I ever met, and his conversations did much to soothe my mind, at a time when I was suffering considerable

mental pain. We used to walk together, and one of our favourite haunts was the large natural terrace that hangs over the cliffs of Babbacombe Bay.

Lord Lingard called one day to pay his respects to my father, and inquire after his health. He was in a flow of spirits, and my father could not help remarking what a vigorous constitution Lord Lingard seemed to have. He was in a high state of health, and his clear bright eyes twinkled with happiness. His deportment was gracious with the complacency of happiness; for in most persons good fortune generally imparts a joyous and animated bearing. He frequently came into Torquay, and accosted me more than once in my rambles.

"Who should come down here but Gabriel Cleveland!" said he. "He has bought a schooner yacht, and is sailing about the south coast of England. An odd being for a bridegroom—a sea-sick bride! Ha! ha!

But the truth is, I suppose, that Cleveland is ashamed of his *mésalliance*. But I cannot find it in my heart to cut the fellow, and I have consented to take a short cruise with him to-morrow. He is to-day at Dartmouth, and he will be here in his yacht early in the morning, and I shall set sail from here on to-morrow, for four or five hours to inhale the sea breeze, and see whether the Atalanta is equal to all he says of her."

"And will Mrs. Cleveland be of the party?" said I.

"No! no! Catch me at that. It would be too much of a good thing."

CHAPTER XX.

"DIGNUS VINDICE NODUS."

THE next day was Sunday. One of the first objects that caught my eye in the anchorage the next morning was the little schooner, the Atalanta; a very model of nautical elegance. Walking on the pier, I was hailed by her owner, Cleveland, who in a rollicking way alluded to his marriage; laughed at the part which he played in ma-

trimony; and tried to bear himself boldly. But I saw that his eye fell as I looked on him closely, and he was glad to change the conversation. He pressed me eagerly to join in a short cruise that day, along with Lord Lingard and himself, and said that he had been ordering a capital dinner at the hotel at Teignmouth, where they would dine; and he promised that he would give me a pleasant day if I would join with him. But I pleaded the state of my father's health, and declined coldly his invitation. He indulged, also, in some intolerable quizzing on Lord Lingard's approaching marriage, and told me that Thursday was finally fixed upon for the ceremony.

While the church bells were ringing, and the people on their way to Divine service, Lord Lingard and Gabriel Cleveland left the hotel to take a boat for the Atalanta.

"Won't you wait for prayers, my Lord?" cried Sir Hartopp Douglas, a broken-down

Scotch baronet, who was crawling about the beach.

"Pooh! Cleveland is his own chaplain," said Lord Lingard, laughing.

"And the devil's own chaplain," said Sir Hartopp, in a low tone of voice.

The yachters got on board, and a group of loungers stood by looking at the little schooner, her sails flapping in the wind, and her flag fluttering from the peak. Her masts were too tall for her hull, but their very height contributed to the picturesqueness of her appearance. Her anchor was heaved up in a trice, and in a few seconds she was under weigh for her cruise.

It was a very beautiful day, and after an early dinner with my family, I strolled out by myself, to enjoy the afternoon breeze, as the day in the early part had been very sultry. I bent my steps in the direction of Babbacombe, and there I found Twycross on the terrace walk that overhangs the cliffs.

I have seen many of the finest sea views in Europe—the view of Cadiz from the sea —of the ocean from Cintra—and of the Dardanelles—but the scene at Babbacombe Bay has a loveliness quite peculiar to itself. The eye on looking to the west beholds a long line of sea coast stretching away towards Portland Race—dotted with little picturesque towns, whose shining and white houses glitter and spangle in the sun. The coast stretches away in a graceful sinuous course of beauty; the ocean in a murmuring tone heaves itself calmly like a great placid lake, and the white sails of the ships from America sailing up the Channel give the vast expanse a pleasing animation that contrasts with the calm grandeur of the natural scenery with which the eye is ravished in that lovely view.

It was a favourite haunt of mine, and I have spent hours there in a state of feeling, partaking of metaphysical reflection, and of

that sense of enjoyment which one feels in beholding a beautiful object. On that Sunday, Twycross and I were in a graver mood than usual.

"Poor Penrose!" said Twycross; "there is his house, just over Teignmouth. He is breathing his last hours. His doctor told me that he cannot last many days. He will probably not be alive this day week."

"Penrose—the witty—the poetical—the brilliant! Alas! 'How! full of burs this heavy working-day world is!' Penrose dying—and his old rival Mackenzie is going forward in the race of life, and covering himself with distinction. Which is his house, I cannot distinguish it very plainly?"

"You see it just over Teignmouth—a long white cottage on a lawn. It was built by his father, Serjeant Penrose, after his retirement from the bar, and it was there that Penrose was born and spent his youth. Poor—poor Penrose!"

I glanced my eye along the range of coast down to Dawlish, where I could plainly see the cottage of old Sir Richard Mowbray, the cottage where Lady Jane was expected on the next day, and where, upon the following Thursday, her marriage with Lord Lingard would be solemnised.

Twycross left me alone; and in a musing mood I strutted up and down, and at length threw myself upon the ground, and gazed upon the loveliness of the landscape expanded before me. "Penrose will be dead, and Lady Jane be married, before another week! And thus runs the world away! What is life, and why should we distract ourselves about its brief bubbles and its vain shadows?"

The sea was calm, and its deep azure surface was specked here and there by the sails of a few small boats that had sailed out from the little towns and villages along the sea-coast. The land, as it stretched away eastward, was covered with a blue tint; and

there was a combination of colours that delighted the eye. The place in which I was lying indulging in a pensive strain of thought, was immediately over the hanging village of Babbacombe. The land there seems to run out into the sea, which deeply indents the coast, and forms the bay of Babbacombe land-locked from the north and west, and open only to the south and south-east. As I lay with my back to the south, the water before me seemed enclosed by the land, and looked like a vast lake.

All was fine and lovely before my eyes, and I took no notice of the signs of the horizon to the westward, until a fisherman passing near me, said something about "a capful of hurricane to the south;" and I looked towards the sea, and saw a dense mass of black cloud sweeping along the line of horizon, and coming from the south-west. It had the appearance of one of those dense clouds that are seen in March, but was far

blacker and more angry than nearly any cloud I had ever seen. I heard the muttering of thunder.

"That schooner," said a sailor, "will catch it, if she don't port hard, and luff in time as fast as her tackle will allow."

My eye caught the schooner. She was some three miles from shore, and was scudding in for Teignmouth. I knew her rig, and could see quite plainly by her carrying a jigger sail, that it was the little Atalanta. My eyes were rivetted upon it, as in a few minutes the storm-blast came sweeping on, passing over the surface of the sea like a great vapouring fiend—black, fierce, and intense—swollen with evil and danger to all who met its course.

An American vessel was sailing up Channel, and I saw her seamen spring up her rigging, and "dowse" her top-masts, and take in her canvass with great rapidity. My eye for a moment was taken off the

schooner, while, as the heavy rain-drops began to patter about, I looked round for a place of shelter, and was called under a beetling cliff by the cheering voices of some men who clustered under it. From beneath this overhanging rock we had a view seaward, and could see the storm passing along right across the line of sailing in which were the bark and the schooner.

"What the devil are they at in the schooner?" said a fisherman. "Why don't they furl up all canvass, and scud for it; 'tis their best chance."

"He's trying to carry on to the last moment, and hopes to luff to windward of the blast. If he could get a point or two more on the larboard tack, he would be all right. Ha! 'tis on him now."

Away went the flying-jib of the schooner. We could see it tossed up in the air, and whirled along like a balloon. All the sails of the schooner were now "dowsed" at once, and in an instant after she was hid

from our sight by a dense cloud, which seemed to burst over our heads with the angriest fury. Down, down came the hail, crashing and spattering about like a mass of ice pellets, and the blast of wind howled with the fiercest rage.

"I'd rather be here than aboard the schooner," said one of the fishermen.

"Aye! aye! And ditto for me," cried another.

The storm was very short, but tremendously severe. It scarcely lasted five minutes, from first to last, in its passing, and was well described as "a capful of hurricane."

The first thing that met our eyes as the storm began to clear away, was the sight of the American bark, with her main-mast shattered, her sails and rigging all torn, and her seamen running about with the haste of men who had plenty of pressing work before them.

"The schooner is driven far in by the

gale," said one of the fishermen, as at first we did not see her in the spot where we had last beheld her.

"She's gone, by the Lord!" cried one of the seamen. "You will never see her again!"

There was a moment of breathless and intense suspense, as we looked for the schooner. The clouds cleared away. All was fine again. The schooner had gone down!

* * * * * *

On that evening, late at night, I was present when the dead bodies of Lord Lingard and Gabriel Cleveland were washed ashore. My feelings experienced a strange excitement as I gazed upon those whom I had seen in the morning full of life and strength, now corpses before my eyes; their souls gone to judgment.

There was an inquest on the following morning, and amongst those who attended

it was Johnson, the attorney, who told me that releases of all the mortgages due upon the Mowbray estate had been executed, and that no money was now due from the Earl of Mowbray to Gaspar Cleveland, who was heir-at-law to Lord Lingard.

My story is at end. In a year from that time I had the unspeakable happiness of calling Lady Jane my own. Her father enjoys his rent-roll free from the incumbrances which were due to Lord Lingard, and Gaspar Cleveland has intimated that one-half of the Lingard estates will revert to the Mowbray family, which promises to flourish with undiminished dignity for generations yet to come. Cleveland himself has become a Jesuit, and is devoted to antiquarian pursuits; his passions are burnt out, except when he has a controversy with Sir Henry Ellis or Sir Frederick Madden,

upon the value of some musty manuscripts in the British Museum.

Cumberland is quite a reformed character, and is of some standing at the Bar. His charming wife gives him an endless source of happiness.

St. Leger still leads the same sauntering life as I have always known him to pursue. There is a mystery about his life, and about his birth and personal history. Lady Jane knows all about it, and the only thing she ever refuses me to do, is to give up the secret in her possession about St. Leger's personal history. If I can ever induce her to tell it, perhaps I might divulge it to the reader.

THE END.

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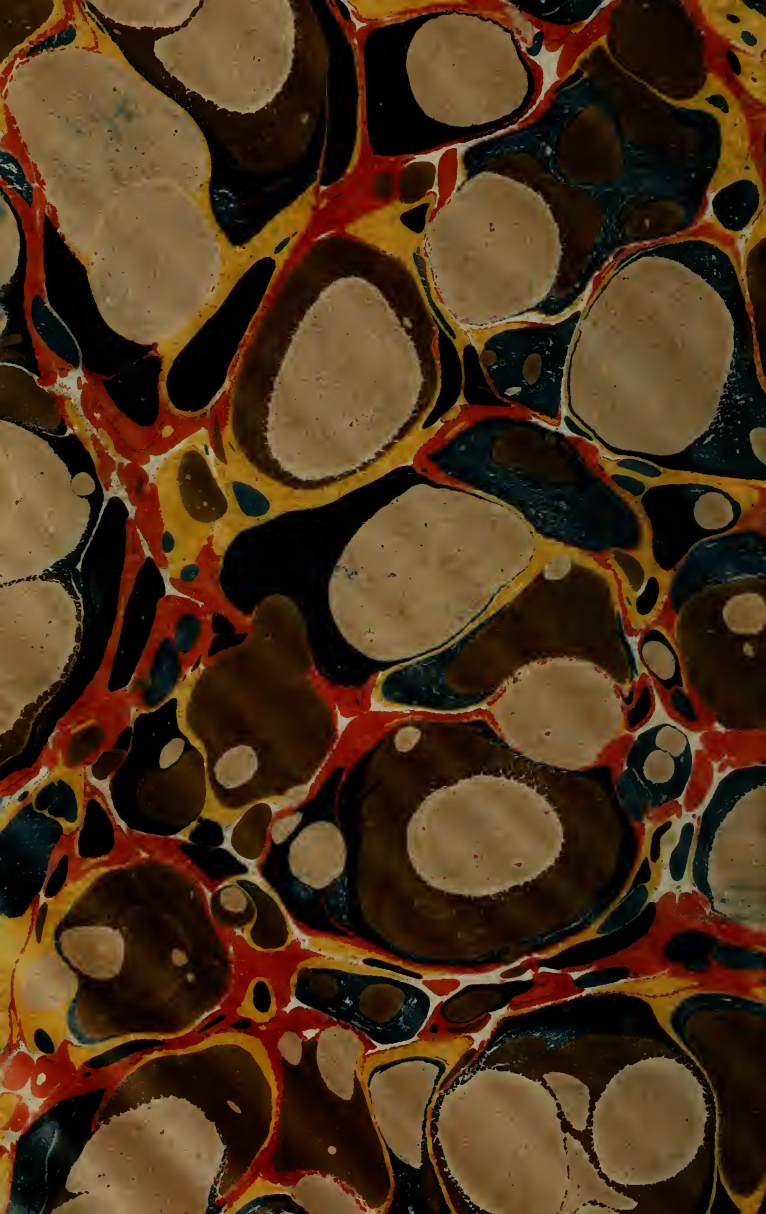

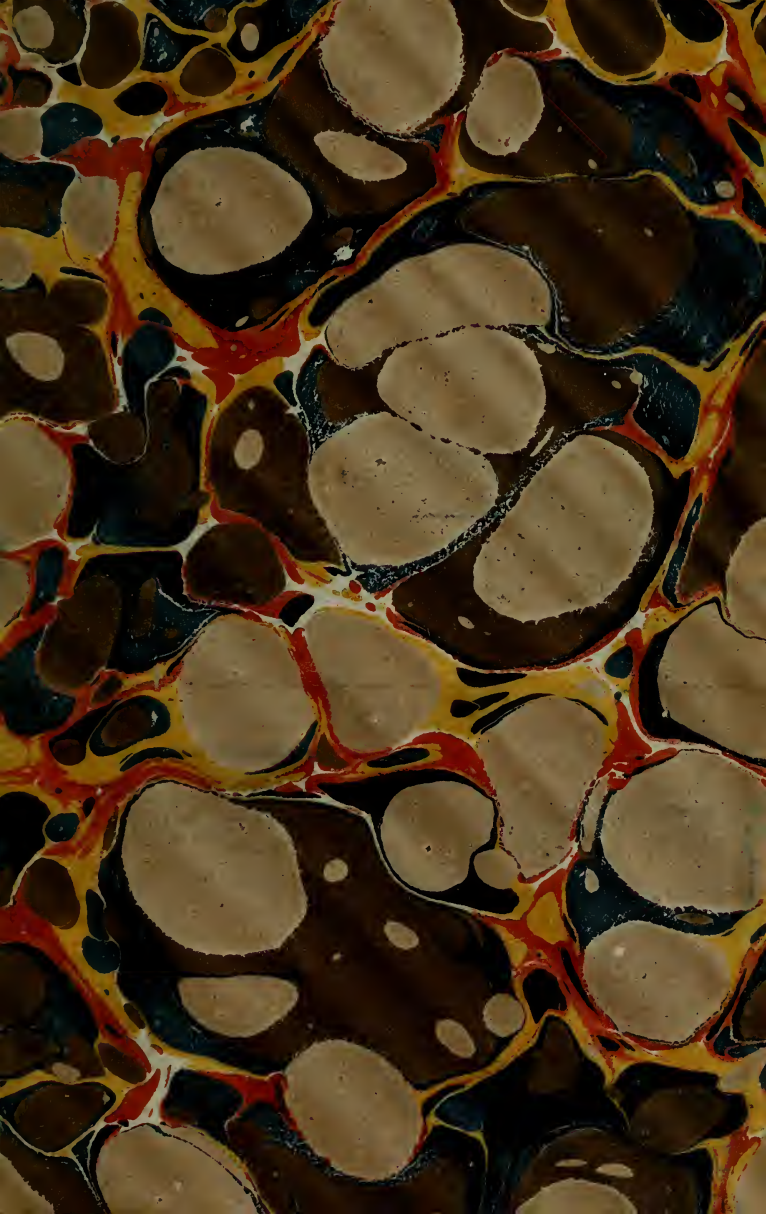

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